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The Shakespeare Head Edition  
Of the Writings of Laurence Sterne  
LETTERS



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# LETTERS OF LAURENCE STERNE



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**T**HE collection of Sterne's Letters, which are contained in the first section of this volume, was first published in three small octavo volumes in October, 1775, bearing the following title: LETTERS of the late Rev. Mr. LAURENCE STERNE, To his most intimate FRIENDS. With a FRAGMENT in the Manner of RABELAIS. To which are prefix'd, Memoirs of his Life and Family. Written by HIMSELF. And Published by his Daughter, Mrs. MEDALLE. In THREE VOLUMES. LONDON: Printed for T. Becket, the Corner of the Adelphi, in the Strand, 1775. A portrait of Lydia Sterne de Medalle, dated August 10th, 1775, and engraved by Caldwell after the painting by B. West forms the frontispiece to the first volume.

*This is without doubt the best and largest collection of the Letters of Laurence Sterne, as originally published, but it was not very carefully edited. No attempt was apparently made to arrange the letters in any chronological sequence, and, as a glance at the table of contents will show, the numeration was erratic. It is probable, too, that some of the letters bearing upon Sterne's relations with his wife were modified to some extent.*

*The Letters are here reprinted from the first edition, but some dates have been supplied from later editions, and the names which in the original and early editions were merely indicated by an initial letter have been completed where knowledge permits. We have been led too by the internal evidence of the Letters themselves to transfer Letters No. LX. and LXXIV, which in the first edition are addressed to Mr. F[oley] at Paris, to his partner Mr. Panchaud. No attempt has been made to modernise the spelling or punctuation, and*

*the typographical features of the original edition have been followed as closely as possible. The Fragment in the Manner of Rabelais which appeared originally in this Collection of Letters will be found in the volume containing A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy.*

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# CONTENTS

---

MEMOIRS OF LAURENCE STERNE	Page i
LETTERS	
I. To Miss Lumley	p. 9
II. To the same	p. 10
III. To the same	p. 12
IV. To the same	p. 14
V. To Stephen Croft, Esq.	p. 17
VI. To the same	p. 19
VII. To the same	p. 21
VIII. To the same	p. 23
IX. To the same	p. 25
X. To the same	p. 27
XI. To Mrs. Ferguson	p. 28
XII. To Dr. *****	p. 30
XIII. To Dr. Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester	p. 35
XIV. To the Rev. Mr. Sterne	p. 36
* XIV. To my Witty Widow, Mrs. Ferguson	p. 38
XV. To Lady ——	p. 40
XVI. To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.	p. 41
XVII. To David Garrick, Esq.	p. 44
XVIII. To Lady D ——	p. 46
XIX. To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.	p. 47
XX. To David Garrick, Esq.	p. 49
XXI. To the same	p. 51
XXII. To Mrs. Sterne, York	p. 54
XXIII. To the same	p. 55
XXIV. To the same	p. 57
XXV. To the same	p. 59
XXVI. To the same	p. 61

XXVII. To Lady D.	p. 64
XXVIII. To Mr. Edmundson, in London	p. 65
XXIX. To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.	p. 66
XXX. To Mr. Foley, at Paris	p. 69
XXXI. To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.	p. 72
XXXII. To Mr. Foley, at Paris	p. 75
XXXIII. To the same	p. 76
XXXIV. To the same	p. 78
XXXV. To the same	p. 79
XXXVI. To the same	p. 80
XXXVII. To the same	p. 81
XXXVIII. To the same	p. 82
XXXIX. To the same	p. 84
XL. To the same	p. 85
XLI. To the same	p. 86
XLII. To the same	p. 87
XLIII. To the same	p. 89
XLIV. To Mrs. Ferguson	p. 90
XLV. To Miss Sterne	p. 92
XLVI. To Mr. Foley	p. 93
XLVII. To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.	p. 95
XLVIII. To Mr. Foley, at Paris	p. 96
XLIX. To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.	p. 98
L. To Mr. Foley at Paris	p. 99
LI. To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.	p. 100
LII. To Mr. Foley, at Paris	p. 102
LIII. To David Garrick, Esq.	p. 103
LIV. To the same	p. 105
LV. To Mr. Foley	p. 107
LVI. To Mr. Woodhouse	p. 108
LVII. To Mr. Foley, at Paris	p. 109
LVIII. To Mrs. Meadows	p. 110
LIX. To Mr. Woodhouse	p. 113



L X . To Mr. Panchaud, at Paris	p. 114
L X I . To the same	p. 115
L X I I . To the same	p. 116
L X I I I . To the same	p. 117
L X I V . To the same	p. 117
L X V . To Miss Sterne	p. 118
L X V I . To Mr. Foley, at Paris	p. 120
L X V I I . To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.	p. 121
L X V I I I . To Mr. Panchaud, at Paris	p. 123
L X I X . To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.	p. 124
L X X . To Mr. Panchaud, at Paris	p. 126
L X X I . To Mr. S.	p. 127
L X X I I . To Mr. Panchaud, at Paris	p. 128
L X X I I I . To Mr. Foley, at Paris	p. 129
L X X I V . To Mr. Panchaud	p. 130
L X X V . To the same	p. 131
L X X V I . To Miss Sterne	p. 132
L X X V I I . To Mr. Panchaud, at Paris	p. 134
* L X X V I I . To David Garrick, Esq.	p. 135
L X X V I I I . To Miss Sterne	p. 137
L X X I X . To Mr. & Mrs. James	p. 139
L X X X . To the Earl of Shelburne	p. 140
L X X X I I . To J. Dillon, Esq.	p. 143
L X X X I I I . To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.	p. 144
L X X X I V . From Ignatius Sancho, to Mr. Sterne	p. 145
L X X X V . From Mr. Sterne, to Ignatius Sancho	p. 146
L X X X V I . To the same	p. 148
L X X X V I I . To the same	p. 149
L X X X V I I I . To Mrs. H.	p. 150
L X X X I X . To the same	p. 151
X C . To his Excellency Sir G. Macartney	p. 151
X C I . To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.	p. 153

XCII. To A. Lee, Esq.	p. 154
XCIII. To the same	p. 155
XCIV. To Mr. and Mrs. James	p. 157
XCV. To Mr. Panchaud, at Paris	p. 158
XCVI. To Mr. and Mrs. James	p. 159
XCVII. To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.	p. 161
XCVIII. To Mr. and Mrs. James	p. 163
XCIX. To Miss Sterne	p. 165
C. To Sir William Stanhope	p. 167
CI. To the same	p. 168
CII. To Mr. Panchaud, at Paris	p. 169
CIII. To Mr. and Mrs. James	p. 170
CIV. To Mrs. Ferguson	p. 172
CV. To Mr. and Mrs. James	p. 173
CVI. To A. Lee, Esq.	p. 175
CVII. To the Earl of Shelburne	p. 176
CVIII. To A. Lee, Esq.	p. 178
CIX. To Mr. and Mrs. James	p. 180
CX. To Lady Percy	p. 181
CXI. To Mr. and Mrs. James	p. 183
CXII. To the same	p. 184
CXIII. To the same	p. 185
CXIV. To G. Selwin, Esq.	p. 186
CXV. To Miss Sterne	p. 188
CXVI. To Mrs. James	p. 189
CXVII. To Mr. Becket	p. 191
AN IMPROMPTU	p. 192
LETTERS PUBLISHED IN 1788	p. 195
LETTERS TO MISS CATHERINE DE FOUR-	
MANTEL	p. 295
LETTERS FROM OTHER SOURCES	p. 309

LETTERS OF THE  
LATE MR. LAURENCE STERNE

To his Most Intimate Friends

To which are prefixed  
Memoirs of his Life and Family  
Written by Himself and published  
by his Daughter Mrs Medalle





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# DEDICATION

TO DAVID GARRICK, Esq.

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WHEN I was ask'd to whom I should dedicate these volumes, I carelessly answered to no one—Why not? (replied the person who put the question to me.) Because most dedications look like begging a protection to the book. Perhaps a worse interpretation may be given to it. No, no! already so much obliged, I cannot, will not, put another tax upon the generosity of any friend of Mr. Sterne's, or mine. I went home to my lodgings, and gratitude warmed my heart to such a pitch, that I vow'd they should be dedicated to the man my father so much admired—who, with an unprejudiced eye, read, and approved his works, and moreover loved the man—'Tis to Mr. Garrick then, that I dedicate these Genuine Letters.

Can I forget the sweet<sup>1</sup> Epitaph which proved Mr. Garrick's friendship, and opinion of him? 'Twas a tribute to friendship—and as a tribute of my gratitude I dedicate these volumes to a man of understanding and feelings—Receive this, as it is meant—May you, dear Sir, approve of these letters, as much as Mr. Sterne admired you—but Mr. Garrick, with all his urbanity, can never carry the point half so far, for Mr. Sterne was an enthusiast, if it is possible to be one, in favour of Mr. Garrick.

This may appear a very simple dedication, but Mr.

<sup>1</sup>See Page xv.

xiv DEDICATION to DAVID GARRICK Esq.

Garrick will judge by his own sensibility, that I can feel more than I can express, and I believe he will give me credit for all my grateful acknowledgements.

I am, with every sentiment of gratitude, and esteem,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged

humble servant,

London,  
June, 1775.

LYDIA STERNE DE MEDALLE.

## EPI'TAPH.

S H A L L Pride a heap of sculptur'd marble raise,  
Some worthless, un-mourn'd titled fool to praise;  
And shall we not by one poor grave-stone learn,  
Where Genius, Wit, and Humour, sleep with *Sterne*?

D. G.





## P R E F A C E .

**I**N publishing these Letters the Editor does but comply with her mother's request, which was, that if any letters were publish'd under Mr. Sterne's name, that those she had in her possession, (as well as those that her father's friends would be kind enough to send to her) should belikewise publish'd---She depends much on the candour of the public for the favourable reception of these, - - -their being genuine (she thinks- - -and hopes) will render them not unacceptable---She has already experienced much benevolence and generosity from her late father's friends- - -the remembrance of it will ever warm her heart with gratitude!



## IN MEMORY OF MR. STERNE

Author of *THE SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY*.

WITH wit, and genuine humour, to dispel,  
From the desponding bosom, gloomy care,  
And bid the gushing tear, at the sad tale  
Of hapless love or filial grief, to flow  
From the full sympathising heart, were thine,  
These powers, Oh Sterne! but now thy fate demands  
(No plumage nodding o'er the emblazon'd hearse  
Proclaiming honor where no virtue shone)  
But the sad tribute of a heart-felt sigh:  
What tho' no taper cast its deadly ray,  
Nor the full choir sing requiems o'er thy tomb,  
The humbler grief of friendship is not mute;  
And poor Maria, with her faithful kid,  
Her auburn tresses carelessly entwin'd  
With olive foliage, at the close of day,  
Shall chaunt her plaintive vespers at thy grave.  
Thy shade too, gentle Monk, mid awful night,  
Shall pour libations from its friendly eye;  
For 'erst his sweet benevolence bestow'd  
Its generous pity, and bedew'd with tears  
The sod, which rested on thy aged breast.



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A CHARACTER, & EULOGIUM OF STERNE,  
and his Writings; in a familiar Epistle from a Gentleman  
in Ireland to his Friend.—Written in the Year 1769.

---

WHAT trifle comes next?—Spare the censure, my friend,

This letter's no more from beginning to end:

Yet, when you consider (your laughter, pray, stifle)

The advantage, the importance, the use, of a trifle—

When you think too beside—and there's nothing more  
clear—

That pence compose millions, and moments the year,

You surely will grant me, nor think that I jest,

That life's but a series of trifles at best.

How wildly digressive! yet could I, O STERNE, <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The late reverend *Laurence Sterne*, A.M. &c. author of that truly original, humorous, heteroclit work, called *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, of *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (which, alas! he did not live to finish) and of some volumes of *Sermons*. Of his skill in delineating and supporting his characters, those of the father of his hero, of his uncle *Toby*, and of corporal *Trim* (out of numberless others) afford ample proof: To his power in the pathetic, whoever shall read the stories of *Le Fevre*, *Maria*, *the Monk*, and *the dead Ass*, must, if he has feelings, bear sufficient testimony: And his *Sermons* throughout (though sometimes, perhaps, chargeable with a levity not entirely becoming the pulpit) breathe the kindest spirit of *Philanthropy*, of *good will towards man*. For the few exceptional parts of his works, those small blemishes

*Quas aut incuria fudit,  
Aut humana parum cavit natura—*

suffer them, kind critic, to rest with his ashes!

The above eulogium will, I doubt not, appear to you (and perhaps also to many others) much too high for the literary character of STERNE; I have not at present either leisure or inclination to enter into argument upon the question; but, in truth I considered myself as largely his debtor for the tears and the laughter he so frequently excited, and was desirous to leave behind me (for so long at least as this trifle shall remain) some small memorial of my gratitude: I will even add, that, although I regard the memory of *Shakespeare* with a veneration little short of idolatry, I esteem the *Monk's horn-box* a relic “as devoutly to be wished” as a pipe-stopper, a walking-stick, or even an inkstand of the *mulberry-tree*.

Digress with thy skill, with thy freedom return!  
 The vain wish I repress-- -Poor YORICK! no more  
 Shall thy mirth and thy jests "set the table on a roar;"  
 No more thy sad tale, with simplicity told,  
 O'er each feeling breast its strong influence hold,  
 From the wise and the brave call forth sympathy's sigh,  
 Or swell with sweet anguish humanity's eye:  
 Here and there in the page if a blemish appear,  
 (And what page, or what life, from a blemish is clear?)  
 TRIM and TOBY with soft intercession attend;  
 LE FEVRE intreats you to pardon his friend;  
 MARIA too pleads, for her favourite distress'd,  
 As you feel for her sorrows, O grant her request!  
 Should these advocates fail, I've another to call,  
 One tear of his MONK shall obliterate all.  
 Favour'd pupil of Nature and Fancy, of yore,  
 Whom from Humour's embrace sweet Philanthropy  
     bore,  
 While the Graces and Loves scatter flow'rs on thy urn,  
 And Wit weeps the blossom too hastily torn;  
 This meed too, kind spirit, unoffended receive  
 From a youth next to SHAKESPEARE'S who honours  
     thy grave!



MEMOIRS *of the* LIFE & FAMILY *of*  
*the late* Rev. Mr. LAURENCE STERNE



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MEMOIRS *of the* LIFE *and* FAMILY *of*  
*the late* Rev. Mr. LAURENCE STERNE

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ROGER STERNE, (grandson to Archbishop Sterne) Lieutenant in Handaside's regiment, was married to Agnes Hebert, widow of a captain of a good family: her family name was (I believe) Nuttle—though, upon recollection, that was the name of her father-in-law, who was a noted sutler in Flanders, in Queen Ann's wars, where my father married his wife's daughter (N.B. he was in debt to him) which was in September 25, 1711, Old Stile.—This Nuttle had a son by my grandmother—a fine person of a man but a graceless whelp—what became of him I know not.—The family (if any left), live now at Clonmel in the south of Ireland, at which town I was born November 24th, 1713, a few days after my mother arrived from Dunkirk.—My birth-day was ominous to my poor father, who was, the day after our arrival with many other brave officers broke, and sent adrift into the wide world with a wife and two children—the elder of which was Mary; she was born in Lisle in French Flanders, July the tenth, one thousand seven hundred and twelve, New Stile.—This child was most unfortunate—she married one Weemans in Dublin—who used her most unmercifully—spent his substance, became a bankrupt, and left my poor sister to shift for herself,—which she was able to do but for a few months, for she went to a friend's house in the country, and died of a broken heart. She was a most beautiful woman—of a fine figure, and

deserved a better fate.—The regiment, in which my father served, being broke, he left Ireland as soon as I was able to be carried, with the rest of his family, and came to the family seat at Elvington, near York, where his mother lived. She was daughter to Sir Roger Jaques, and an heiress. There we sojourned for about ten months, when the regiment was established, and our household decamped with bag and baggage for Dublin—within a month of our arrival, my father left us, being ordered to Exeter, where, in a sad winter, my mother and her two children followed him, travelling from Liverpool by land to Plymouth. (Melancholy description of this journey not necessary to be transmitted here). In twelve months we were all sent back to Dublin.—My mother, with three of us, (for she laid in at Plymouth of a boy, Joram), took ship at Bristol, for Ireland, and had a narrow escape from being cast away by a leak springing up in the vessel.—At length, after many perils, and struggles, we got to Dublin.—There my father took a large house, furnished it, and in a year and a half's time spent a great deal of money.—In the year one thousand seven hundred and nineteen, all unhing'd again; the regiment was ordered, with many others, to the Isle of Wight, in order to embark for Spain in the Vigo expedition. We accompanied the regiment, and was driven into Milford Haven, but landed at Bristol, from thence by land to Plymouth again, and to the Isle of Wight—where I remember we stayed encamped some time before the embarkation of the troops—(in this expedition from Bristol to Hampshire we lost poor Joram—a pretty boy, four years old, of the small-pox), my mother, sister, and myself, remained at the Isle of Wight during the Vigo Expedition, and until the regi-

ment had got back to Wicklow in Ireland, from whence my father sent for us.—We had poor Joram's loss supplied during our stay in the Isle of Wight, by the birth of a girl, Anne, born September the twenty-third, one thousand seven hundred and nineteen.—This pretty blossom fell at the age of three years, in the Barracks of Dublin—she was, as I well remember, of a fine delicate frame, not made to last long, as were most of my father's babes.—We embarked for Dublin, and had all been cast away by a most violent storm; but through the intercessions of my mother, the captain was prevailed upon to turn back into Wales, where we stayed a month, and at length got into Dublin, and travelled by land to Wicklow, where my father had for some weeks given us over for lost.—We lived in the barracks at Wicklow, one year, (one thousand seven hundred and twenty) when Devijeher (so called after Colonel Devijeher,) was born; from thence we decamped to stay half a year with Mr. Fetherston, a clergyman, about seven miles from Wicklow, who being a relation of my mother's, invited us to his parsonage at Animo.—It was in this parish, during our stay, that I had that wonderful escape in falling through a mill-race whilst the mill was going, and of being taken up unhurt—the story is incredible, but known for truth in all that part of Ireland—where hundreds of the common people flocked to see me.—From hence we followed the regiment to Dublin, where we lay in the barracks a year.—In this year, one thousand seven hundred and twenty-one, I learned to write, &c.—The regiment, ordered in twenty-two, to Carrickfergus in the north of Ireland; we all decamped, but got no further than Drogheda, thence ordered to Mullengar, forty miles west, where by Provi-

dence we stumbled upon a kind relation, a collateral descendant from Archbishop Sterne, who took us all to his castle and kindly entreated us for a year—and sent us to the regiment at Carrickfergus, loaded with kindnesses, &c.—a most rueful and tedious journey had we all, in March, to Carrickfergus, where we arrived in six or seven days—little Devijeher here died, he was three years old—He had been left behind at nurse at a farmhouse near Wicklow, but was fetch'd to us by my father the summer after—another child sent to fill his place, Susan; this babe too left us behind in this weary journey—The autumn of that year, or the spring afterwards, (I forget which) my father got leave of his colonel to fix me at school—which he did near Halifax, with an able master; with whom I staid some time, 'till by God's care of me my cousin Sterne, of Elvington, became a father to me, and sent me to the university, &c. &c. To pursue the thread of our story, my father's regiment was the year after ordered to Londonderry, where another sister was brought forth, Catherine, still living, but most unhappily estranged from me by my uncle's wickedness, and her own folly—from this station the regiment was sent to defend Gibraltar, at the seige, where my father was run through the body by Captain Phillips, in a duel, (the quarrel begun about a goose) with much difficulty he survived—tho' with an impaired constitution, which was not able to withstand the hardships it was put to—for he was sent to Jamaica, where he soon fell by the country fever, which took away his senses first, and made a child of him, and then, in a month or two, walking about continually without complaining, till the moment he sat down in an arm chair, and breathed his last—which was at Port Antonio, on the north of the island.—My father

was a little smart man—active to the last degree, in all exercises—most patient of fatigue and disappointments, of which it pleased God to give him full measure—he was in his temper somewhat rapid, and hasty—but of a kindly, sweet disposition, void of all design; and so innocent in his own intentions, that he suspected no one; so that you might have cheated him ten times in a day, if nine had not been sufficient for your purpose—my poor father died in March 1731—I remained at Halifax 'till about the latter end of that year, and cannot omit mentioning this anecdote of myself, and school-master—He had had the cieling of the school-room new white-washed—the ladder remained there—I one unlucky day mounted it, and wrote with a brush in large capital letters, LAU. STERNE, for which the usher severely whipped me. My master was very much hurt at this, and said, before me, that never should that name be effaced, for I was a boy of genius, and he was sure I should come to preferment—this expression made me forget the stripes I had received—In the year thirty-two my cousin sent me to the university, where I staid some time. 'Twas there that I commenced a friendship with Mr. Hall, which has been most lasting on both sides—I then came to York, and my uncle got me the living of Sutton—and at York I become acquainted with your mother, and courted her for two years—she owned she liked me, but thought herself not rich enough, or me too poor, to be joined together—she went to her sister's in Staffordshire, and I wrote to her often—I believe then she was partly determined to have me, but would not say so—at her return she fell into a consumption—and one evening that I was sitting by her with an almost broken heart to see her so ill, she said, “my dear Lawrey, I can never be yours, for I



verily believe I have not long to live—but I have left you every shilling of my fortune;”—upon that she shewed me her will—this generosity overpowered me.—It pleased God that she recovered, and I married her in the year 1741. My uncle and myself were then upon very good terms, for he soon got me the Prebendary of York—but he quarrelled with me afterwards, because I would not write paragraphs in the newspapers—though he was a party-man, I was not, and detested such dirty work: thinking it beneath me—from that period, he became my bitterest enemy.—By my wife’s means I got the living of Stillington—a friend of her’s in the south had promised her, that if she married a clergyman in Yorkshire, when the living became vacant, he would make her a compliment of it. I remained near twenty years at Sutton, doing duty at both places—I had then very good health.—Books, painting, fiddling, and shooting were my amusements; as to the ’Squire of the parish, I cannot say we were upon a very friendly footing—but at Stillington, the family of the Crofts shewed us every kindness—’twas most truly agreeable to be within a mile and a half of an amiable family, who were ever cordial friends—In the year 1760, I took a house at York for your mother and yourself, and went up to London to publish my two first volumes of Shandy. In that year Lord Falconbridge presented me with the curacy of Coxwold—a sweet retirement in comparison of Sutton. In sixty-two I went to France before the peace was concluded, and you both followed me.—I left you both in France, and in two years after I went to Italy for the recovery of my health—and when I called upon you, I tried to engage your mother to return to England, with me—she and yourself are at

length come—and I have had the inexpressible joy of seeing my girl every thing I wished her.

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*I have set down these particulars relating to my family, and self, for my Lydia, in case hereafter she might have a curiosity, or a kinder motive to know them.*

**I**N justice to Mr. Sterne's delicate feelings, I must here publish the following letters to Mrs. Sterne, before he married her, when she was in Staffordshire—A good heart breathes in every line of them.

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# LETTERS

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## LETTER I.

To Miss Lumley.

**Y**ES! I will steal from the world, and not a babbling tongue shall tell where I am—Echo shall not so much as whisper my hiding place—suffer thy imagination to paint it as a little sun-gilt cottage on the side of a romantic hill—dost thou think I will leave love and friendship behind me? No! they shall be my companions in solitude, for they will sit down, and rise up with me in the amiable form of my L.—we will be as merry, and as innocent as our first parents in Paradise, before the arch fiend entered that undescribable scene.

The kindest affections will have room to shoot and expand in our retirement, and produce such fruit, as madness, and envy, and ambition have always killed in the bud.—Let the human tempest and hurricane rage at a distance, the desolation is beyond the horizon of peace.—My L. has seen a Polyanthus blow in December—some friendly wall has sheltered it from the biting wind.—No planetary influence shall reach us, but that which presides and cherishes the sweetest flowers.—God preserve us, how delightful this prospect in idea! We will build, and we will plant, in our own way—simplicity shall not be tortured by art—we will learn of nature how to live—she shall be our alchymist, to mingle all the good of life into

one salubrious draught.—The gloomy family of care and distrust shall be banished from our dwelling, guarded by thy kind and tutelar deity—we will sing our choral songs of gratitude, and rejoice to the end of our pilgrimage.

Adieu, my L. Return to one who languishes for thy society.

L. STERNE.

## LETTER II.

To the same.

**Y**OU bid me tell you, my dear L. how I bore your departure for Staffs., and whether the valley where D'Estella stands retains still its looks—or, if I think the roses or jessamines smell as sweet, as when you left it.—Alas! every thing has now lost its relish, and look! The hour you left D'Estella I took to my bed.—I was worn out with fevers of all kinds, but most by that fever of the heart with which thou knowest well I have been wasting these two years—and shall continue wasting 'till you quit Staffordshire. The good Miss S——, from the forebodings of the best of hearts, thinking I was ill, insisted upon my going to her.—What can be the cause, my dear L. that I never have been able to see the face of this mutual friend, but I feel myself rent to pieces? She made me stay an hour with her, and in that short space I burst into tears a dozen different times—and in such affectionate gusts of passion that she was constrained to leave the room, and sympathize in her dressing room—I have been weeping for

you both, said she, in a tone of the sweetest pity—for poor L's heart I have long known it—her anguish is as sharp as yours—her heart as tender—her constancy as great—her virtues as heroic—Heaven brought you not together to be tormented. I could only answer her with a kind look, and a heavy sigh—and return'd home to your lodgings (which I have hired 'till your return) to resign myself to misery—Fanny had prepared me a supper—she is all attention to me—but I sat over it with tears; a bitter sauce, my L. but I could eat it with no other—for the moment she began to spread my little table, my heart fainted within me.—One solitary plate, one knife, one fork, one glass!—I gave a thousand pensive, penetrating looks at the chair thou hadst so often graced, in those quiet, and sentimental repasts—then laid down my knife, and fork, and took out my handkerchief, and clapped it across my face, and wept like a child.—I do so this very moment, my L. for as I take up my pen my poor pulse quickens, my pale face glows, and tears are trickling down upon the paper, as I trace the word L——. O thou! blessed in thyself, and in thy virtues—blessed to all that know thee—to me most so, because more do I know of thee than all thy sex.—This is the philtre, my L. by which thou hast charmed me, and by which thou wilt hold me thine whilst virtue and faith hold this world together.—This, my friend, is the plain and simple magick by which I told Miss —— I have won a place in that heart of thine, on which I depend so satisfied, that time, or distance, or change of every thing which might alarm the hearts of little men, create no uneasy suspence in mine—Wast thou to stay in Staffordshire these seven years, thy friend, though he would grieve, scorns to doubt, or to be doubted—'tis the only exception where security is not the

parent of danger.—I told you poor Fanny was all attention to me since your departure—contrives every day bringing in the name of L. She told me last night (upon giving me some hartshorn) she had observed my illness began the very day of your departure for Staffordshire; that I had never held up my head, had seldom, or scarce ever smiled, had fled from all society—that she verily believed I was broken-hearted, for she had never entered the room, or passed by the door, but she heard me sigh heavily—that I neither eat, or slept, or took pleasure in any thing as before;—judge then, my L. can the valley look so well—or the roses and jessamines smell so sweet as heretofore? Ah me!—But adieu—the vesper bell calls me from thee to my God!

L. STERNE.

### LETTER III.

To the same.

**B**EFORE now my L. has lodged an indictment against me in the high court of Friendship—I plead guilty to the charge, and intirely submit to the mercy of that amiable tribunal.—Let this mitigate my punishment, if it will not expiate my transgression—do not say that I shall offend again in the same manner, though a too easy pardon sometimes occasions a repetition of the same fault.—A miser says, though I do no good with my money to-day, to-morrow shall be marked with some deed of beneficence.—The Libertine says, let me enjoy



this week in forbidden and luxurious pleasures, and the next I will dedicate to serious thought and reflection.—The Gamester says, let me have one more chance with the dice, and I will never touch them more.—The Knave of every profession wishes to obtain but independency, and he will become an honest man.—The Female Coquette triumphs in tormenting her inamorato, for fear, after marriage, he should not pity her.

Thy apparition of the fifth instant, (for letters may almost be called so) proved more welcome as I did not expect it. Oh! my L——, thou art kind indeed to make an apology for me, and thou never wilt assuredly repent of one act of kindness—for being thy debtor, I will pay thee with interest.—Why does my L. complain of the desertion of friends?—Where does the human being live that will not join in this complaint?—It is a common observation, and perhaps too true, that married people seldom extend their regards beyond their own fireside.—There is such a thing as parsimony in esteem, as well as money—yet as the one costs nothing, it might be bestowed with more liberality.—We cannot gather grapes from thorns, so we must not expect kind attachments from persons who are wholly folded up in selfish schemes.—I do not know whether I most despise, or pity such characters—nature never made an unkind creature—ill usage, and bad habits, have deformed a fair and lovely creation.

My L!—thou art surrounded by all the melancholy gloom of winter; wert thou alone, the retirement would be agreeable.—Disappointed ambition might envy such a retreat, and disappointed love would seek it out.—Crouded towns, and busy societies, may delight the un-

thinking, and the gay—but solitude is the best nurse of wisdom.—Methinks I see my contemplative girl now in the garden, watching the gradual approaches of spring.—Do'st not thou mark with delight the first vernal buds? the snow-drop, and primrose, these early and welcome visitors, spring beneath thy feet.—Flora and Pomona already consider thee as their handmaid; and in a little time will load thee with their sweetest blessing.—The feathered race are all thy own, and with them, untaught harmony will soon begin to cheer thy morning and evening walks.—Sweet as this may be, return—return—the birds of Yorkshire will tune their pipes, and sing as melodiously as those of Staffordshire.

Adieu, my beloved L. thine too much for my *peace*.

L. STERNE.

#### LETTER IV.

To the same.

I HAVE offended her whom I so tenderly love!—what could tempt me to it! but if a beggar was to knock at thy gate, wouldst thou not open the door and be melted with compassion.—I know thou wouldst, for Pity has erected a temple in thy bosom.—Sweetest, and best of all human passions! let thy web of tenderness cover the pensive form of affliction, and soften the darkest shades of misery! I have re-considered this apology, and, alas! what will it accomplish? Arguments, however finely spun,

can never change the nature of things—very true—so a truce with them.

I have lost a very valuable friend by a sad accident, and what is worse, he has left a widow and five young children to lament this sudden stroke.—If real usefulness and integrity of heart, could have secured him from this, his friends would not now be mourning his untimely fate.—These dark and seemingly cruel dispensations of Providence, often make the best of human hearts complain.—Who can paint the distress of an affectionate mother, made a widow in a moment, weeping in bitterness over a numerous, helpless, and fatherless offspring?—God! these are thy chastisements, and require (hard task!) a pious acquiescence.

Forgive me this digression, and allow me to drop a tear over a departed friend; and what is more excellent, an honest man. My L! thou wilt feel all that kindness can inspire in the death of——The event was sudden, and thy gentle spirit would be more alarmed on that account.—But my L. thou hast less to lament, as old age was creeping on, and her period of doing good, and being useful, was nearly over.—At sixty years of age the tenement gets fast out of repair, and the lodger with anxiety thinks of a discharge.—In such a situation the poet might well say

“The soul uneasy, &c.”

My L. talks of leaving the country—may a kind angel guide thy steps hither.—Solitude at length grows tiresome.—Thou sayest thou wilt quit the place with regret—I think so too.—Does not something uneasy mingle

with the very reflection of leaving it? It is like parting with an old friend, whose temper and company one has long been acquainted with.—I think I see you looking twenty times a day at the house—almost counting every brick and pane of glass, and telling them at the same time with a sigh, you are going to leave them.—Oh happy modification of matter! they will remain insensible of thy loss.—But how wilt thou be able to part with thy garden?—The recollection of so many pleasing walks must have endeared it to you. The trees, the shrubs, the flowers, which thou reared with thy own hands—will they not droop and fade away sooner upon thy departure.—Who will be the successor to nurse them in thy absence.—Thou wilt leave thy name upon the myrtle-tree.—If trees and shrubs, and flowers, could compose an elegy, I should expect a very plaintive one upon this subject.

Adieu, adieu. Believe me ever, ever thine,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER V.

To Stephen Croft, Esq.

London, Christmas Day [1760].

My Dear Friend,

I HAVE been in such a continual hurry since the moment I arrived here—what with my books, and what with visiters, and visitings, that it was not in my power sooner to sit down and acknowledge the favour of your obliging letter; and to thank you for the most friendly motives which led you to write it: I am not much in pain upon what gives my kind friends at Stillington so much on the chapter of *Noses*—because, as the principal satire throughout that part is levelled at those learned block-heads who, in all ages, have wasted their time and much learning upon points as foolish—it shifts off the idea of what you fear, to another point—and 'tis thought here very good—'twill pass muster—I mean not with all—no—no! I shall be attacked and pelted, either from cellars or garrets, write what I will—and besides, must expect to have a party against me of many hundreds—who either do not—or will not laugh.—'Tis enough if I divide the world;—at least I will rest contented with it.—I wish you was here to see what changes of looks and political reasoning, have taken place in every company, and coffee-house since last year; we shall be soon Prussians and Anti-Prussians, Butes's and Anti-Butes, and those distinctions will just do as well as Whig and Tory—and for aught I know serve the same ends.—The

K. seems resolved to bring all things back to their original principles, and to stop the torrent of corruption and laziness.—He rises every morning at six to do business—rides out at eight to a minute, returns at nine to give himself up to his people.—By persisting, 'tis thought he will oblige his Ministers and dependants, to dispatch affairs with him many hours sooner than of late—and 'tis much to be question'd whether they will not be enabled to wait upon him sooner by being free'd from long levees of their own, and applications; which will in all likelyhood be transferr'd from them directly to himself—the present system being to remove that Phalanx of great people which stood betwixt the throne and the subjects, and suffer them to have immediate access without the intervention of a caball—(this is the language of others): however the K. gives every thing himself, knows every thing, and weighs every thing maturely, and then is inflexible—this puts old stagers off their game—how it will end we are all in the dark.

'Tis fear'd the war is quite over in Germany; never was known such havock amongst troops—I was told yesterday by a Colonel, from Germany, that out of two battalions of nine hundred men, to which he belong'd, but seventy-one left!—Prince Ferdinand has sent word, 'tis said, that he must have forty-thousand men directly sent to take the field—and with provisions for them too, for he can but subsist them for a fortnight—I hope this will find you all got to York—I beg my compliments to the amiable Mrs. Croft, &c. &c.

Tho' I purposed going first to Golden-Square, yet



fate has thus long disposed of me—so I have never been able to set a foot towards that quarter.

I am, dear Sir,

Your's affectionately

L. STERNE.

## LETTER VI.

To the same.

My dear Sir,

[About Jan., 1761.]

**I**HAVE just time to acknowledge the favour of yours but not to get the two prints you mention—which shall be sent you by next post—I have bought them, and lent them to Miss Gilbert, but will assuredly send for them and enclose them to you:—I will take care to get your pictures well copied, and at a moderate price. And if I can be of further use, I beseech you to employ me; and from time to time will send you an account of whatever may be worth transmitting.—The stream now sets in strong against the German war. Loud complaints of ——— making a trade of the war, &c. &c. much expected from Ld. Granby's evidence to these matters, who is expected every hour;—the King wins every day upon the people, shews himself much at the play, (but at no opera) rides out with his brothers every morn-

ing, half an hour after seven, till nine—returns with them—spends an hour with them at breakfast, and chat—and then sits down to business. I never dined at home once since I arrived—am fourteen dinners deep engaged just now, and fear matters will be worse with me in that point than better.——As to the main points in view, at which you hint—all I can say is, that I see my way, and unless Old Nick throws the dice—shall, in due time, come off winner.——Tristram will be out the twentieth—there is a great rout made about him before he enters the stage—whether this will be of use or no, I can't say—some wits of the first magnitude here, both as to wit and station, engage me success—time will shew—Adieu, dear Sir! and with my compliments to Mrs. Croft, &c.

I am your affectionate,

and obliged

L. STERNE.



## LETTER VII.

To the same.

Dear Sir,

[May, 1760.]

**I** THIS moment received the favour of your kind letter.—The letter in the Ladies Magazine about me, was wrote by the noted Dr. Hill, who wrote the Inspector, and undertakes that magazine—the people of York are very uncharitable to suppose any man so gross a beast as to pen such a character of himself.—In this great town no soul ever suspected it, for a thousand reasons—could they suppose I should be such a fool as to fall foul upon Dr. Warburton, my best friend, by representing him so weak a man—or by telling such a lye of him—as his giving me a purse, to buy off his tutorship for Tristram!—or I should be fool enough to own I had taken his purse for that purpose!

You must know there is a quarrel between Dr. Hill and Dr. Mounsey, who was the physician meant at Mr Charles Stanhope's, and Dr. Hill has changed the place on purpose to give Mounsey a lick.—Now that conversation, (tho' perhaps true) yet happen'd at another place, and with another physician; which I have contradicted in this city for the honour of my friend Mounsey, all which shews the absurdity of York credulity, and nonsense. Besides the account is full of falshoods—first with regard to the place of my birth, which was at Clonmel, in Ireland—the story of a hundred pounds to Mrs. Wilkinson not true, or of a *pension promised*; the merit of which I dis-

claim'd—and indeed there are so many other things so untrue, and unlikely to come from me, that the worst enemy I have here never had a suspicion—and to end all Dr. Hill owns the paper.

I shall be down before May is out—I preach before the Judges on Sunday—my sermons come out on Thursday after—and I purpose the Monday at furthest after that to set out for York—I have bought a pair of horses for that purpose—my best respects to your Lady—

I am,

Dear sir,

Your most obliged and faithful,

L. STERNE.

P. S. I beg pardon for this hasty scrawl, having just come from a Concert where the Duke of York perform'd—I have received great notice from him, and last week had the honour of supping with him.

## LETTER VIII.

To the same.

Dear Sir,

[March, 1761.]

SINCE I had the favour of your obliging letter, nothing has happened, or been said one day, which has not been contradicted the next; so having little certain to write, I have forbore writing at all, in hopes every day of something worth filling up a letter. We had the greatest expectations yesterday that ever were raised, of a pitched battle in the House of Commons, wherein Mr. Pitt was to have entered and thrown down the gauntlet, in defence of the German war.—There never was so full a house—the gallery full to the top—I was there all the day—when, lo! a political fit of the gout seized the great combatant—he entered not the lists—Beckford got up, and begged the house, as he saw not his right honourable friend there, to put off the debate—it could not be done, so Beckford rose up, and made a most long, passionate, incoherent speech, in defence of the Germanick war—but very severe upon the unfrugal manner it was carried on—in which he addressed himself principally to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and laid him on terribly.—It seems the chancery of Hanover had laid out 350,000 pounds, on account, and brought in our treasury debtor—and the grand debate was, for an honest examination of the particulars of this extravagant account, and for vouchers to authenticate it.—Legge answered Beckford very rationally, and coolly—Lord North spoke long—Sir F. Dashwood maintained the German war was most

pernicious—Mr. C——, of Surry, spoke well against the account, with some other,—Lord Barrington at last got up, and spoke half an hour with great plainness, and temper—explained a great many hidden springs relating to these accounts, in favour of the late King and told two or three conversations which had passed between the King and himself, relative to these expences—which cast great honour upon the King's character. This was with regard to the money the King had secretly furnished out of his pocket to lessen the account of the Hanover-score brought us to discharge.

Beckford and Barrington abused all who sought for peace, and joined in the cry for it; and Beckford added, that the reasons of wishing a peace now, were the same as at the peace of Utrecht—that the people behind the curtain could not both maintain the war and their places too, so were for making another sacrifice of the nation, to their own interests.—After all—the cry for a peace is so general, that it will certainly end in one. Now for myself.—

One half of the town abuse my book as bitterly, as the other half cry it up to the skies—the best is, they abuse and buy it, and at such a rate, that we are going on with a second edition, as fast as possible.

I am going down for a day or two with Mr. Spencer, to Wimbleton; on Wednesday there is to be a grand assembly at Lady Northumberland's. I have enquired every where about Stephen's affair, and can hear nothing—My friend, Mr. Charles Townshend, will be now secretary of war—he bid me wish him joy of it, though not in pos-

session.—I will ask him—and depend, my most worthy friend, that you shall not be ignorant of what I learn from him—believe me ever, ever,

Yours,

L. S.

## LETTER IX.

To the same.

My dear Sir,

[April, 1761.]

**A**STRAIN which I got in my wrist by a terrible fall, prevented my acknowledging the favour of your obliging letter. I went yesterday morning to breakfast with Mr. Vansittart, who is a kind of right-hand man to the secretary, on purpose to enquire about the propriety, or feasibility, of doing what you wish me—and he has told me an anecdote which, had you been here, would, I think, have made it wiser to have deferred speaking about the affair a month hence than now; it is this—You must know that the numbers of officers who have left their regiments in Germany, for the pleasures of the town, have been a long topic for merriment; as you see them in St. James's Coffee-house, and the park, every hour, enquiring, open mouth, how things go on in Germany, and what news?—when they should have been there to have furnished news themselves—but the worst part has been, that many of them have left their brother officers on their duty, and in all the fatigues of it, and have come with no end but to make friends, to be put unfairly over the *heads of those*

who were left risking *their lives*.—In this attempt there have been some but too successful, which has justly raised ill-blood and complaints from the officers who staid behind—the upshot has been, that they have every soul been ordered off, and woe be to him ('tis said) who shall be found listening. Now just to mention our friend's case whilst this cry is on foot, I think would be doing more hurt than good, but if you think otherwise, I will go with all my heart and mention it to Mr. Townshend, for to do more I am too inconsiderable a person to pretend to. You made me and my friends here very merry with the accounts current at York, of my being forbid the court—but they do not consider what a considerable person they make of me, when they suppose either my going, or my not going there, is a point that ever enters the K's head—and for those about him, I have the honour either to stand so personally well known to them; or to be so well represented by those of the first rank, as to fear no accident of that kind.

I thank God (B... 's excepted) I have never yet made a friend, or connection I have forfeited, or done ought to forfeit—but on the contrary, my true character is better understood, and where I had one friend last year, who did me honour, I have three now.—If my enemies knew that by this rage of abuse, and ill will, they were effectually serving the interests both of myself, and works, they would be more quiet—but it has been the fate of my betters, who have found, that the way to fame, is like the way to heaven—through much tribulation—and till I shall have the honour to be as much mal-treated as Rabelais, and Swift were, I must continue humble; for I have not filled up the measure of half their *persecutions*.



The court is turning topsy-turvy, Lord Bute le premier—Lord Talbot to be groom of the chambers in room of the Duke of Rutland—Lord Halifax to Ireland—Sir F. Dashwood in Talbot's place—Pitt seems unmoved—a peace inevitable—Stocks rise—the peers this moment kissing hands, &c. &c. (this week may be christened the kiss-hands week) for a hundred changes will happen in consequence of these. Pray present my compliments to Mrs. Croft and all friends, and believe me, with the greatest fidelity,

Your ever obliged,

L. STERNE.

P. S. Is it not strange that Lord Talbot should have power to remove the Duke of Rutland.

Pray when you have read this, send the news to Mrs. Sterne.

## LETTER X.

To the same.

Dear Sir,

[May, 1760.]

**I** RETURN you ten thousand thanks for the favour of your letter—and the account you give me of my wife and girl.—I saw Mr. <sup>1</sup>Ch—y, to-night at Ranelagh who tells me you have inoculated my friend Bobby.—I heartily wish him well through, and hope in God all goes right.

<sup>1</sup>Probably, Cholmley.

On Monday we set out with a grand retinue of Lord Rockingham's (in whose suite I move) for Windsor—they have contracted for fourteen hundred pounds for the dinner, to some general undertaker, of which the K. has bargained to pay one third. Lord George Sackville, was last Saturday at the opera, some say with great effrontery—others with great dejection.

I have little news to add.—There is a shilling pamphlet wrote against Tristram.—I wish they would write a hundred such.

Mrs. Sterne says her purse is light; will you, dear Sir, be so good as to pay her ten guineas, and I will reckon with you when I have the pleasure of meeting you.—My best compliments to Mrs. Croft and all friends.—Believe me, dear Sir, your obliged and faithful

LAU. STERNE.

## LETTER XI.

To Mrs. Ferguson.

York, Tuesday, Nov. 19. [1759]

Dear Madam,

**Y**OUR kind enquiries after my health, deserve my best thanks.—What can give one more pleasure than the good wishes of those we value?—I am sorry you give so bad an account of your own health, but hope you will



find benefit from tar-water—it has been of infinite service to me.—I suppose, my good lady, by what you say in your letter, “that I am busy writing an extraordinary book,” that your intelligence comes from York—the fountain-head of chit-chat news—and—no matter.—Now for your desire of knowing the reason of my turning author? why truly I am tired of employing my brains for other people’s advantage.—’Tis a foolish sacrifice I have made for some years to an ungrateful person.—I depend much upon the candour of the publick, but I shall not pick out a jury to try the merit of my book amongst \* \* \* \* \*, and—till you read my *Tristram*, do not, like some people, condemn it.—Laugh I am sure you will at some passages.—I have hired a small house in the *Minster Yard* for my wife, and daughter—the latter is to begin dancing, &c. if I cannot leave her a fortune, I will at least give her an education.—As I shall publish my works very soon, I shall be in town by *March*, and shall have the pleasure of meeting with you.—All your friends are well, and ever hold you in the same estimation that your sincere friend does.

Adieu, dear lady, believe me, with every wish for your happiness, your most faithful, &c.

LAURENCE STERNE.

## LETTER XII.

To Dr. \*\*\*\*\*.

Jan. 30, 1760.

Dear Sir,

—*D*E *mortuis nil nisi bonum*, is a maxim which you have so often of late urged in conversation, and in your letters, (but in your last especially) with such seriousness, and severity against me, as the supposed transgressor of the rule;—that you have made me at length as serious and severe as yourself:—but that the humours you have stirred up might not work too potently within me, I have waited four days to cool myself, before I would set pen to paper to answer you, “*de mortuis nil nisi bonum*.” I declare I have considered the wisdom, and foundation of it over and over again, as dispassionately and charitably as a good Christian can, and, after all, I can find nothing in it, or make more of it, than a nonsensical lullaby of some nurse, put into Latin by some pedant, to be chanted by some hypocrite to the end of the world, for the consolation of departing lechers.—’Tis, I own, Latin; and I think that is all the weight it has—for, in plain English, ’tis a loose and futile position below a dispute—“*you are not to speak any thing of the dead, but what is good*.” Why so?—Who says so?—neither reason or scripture.—Inspired authors have done otherwise—and reason and common sense tell me, that if the characters of past ages and men are to be drawn at all, they are to be drawn like themselves; that is, with their excel-

lencies, and with their foibles—and it is as much a piece of justice to the world, and to virtue too, to do the one, as the other.—The ruling passion *et les egarements du cœur*, are the very things which mark, and distinguish a man's character;—in which I would as soon leave out a man's head as his hobby-horse.—However, if like the poor devil of a painter, we must conform to this pious canon *de mortuis, &c.* which I own has a spice of piety in the sound of it, and be obliged to paint both our angels and our devils out of the same pot—I then infer that our Sydenhams, and Sangrados, our Lucretias,—and Mas-salinas, our Sommers, and our Bolingbrokes—are alike entitled to statues, and all the historians, or satirists who have said otherwise since they departed this life, from Sallust, to S—e, are guilty of the crimes you charge me with, “cowardice and injustice.”

But why cowardice? “because 'tis not courage to attack a dead man who can't defend himself.”—But why do you doctors of the faculty attack such a one with your incision knife? Oh! for the good of the living.—'Tis my plea.—But I have something more to say in my behalf—and it is this—I am not guilty of the charge—tho' defensible. I have not cut up Doctor Kunaastrokius at all—I have just scratch'd him—and that scarce skin-deep.—I do him first all honour—speak of Kunaastrokius as a great man—(be he who he will) and then most distantly hint at a drole foible in his character—and that not first reported (to the few who can even understand the hint) by me—but known before by every chamber-maid and footman within the bills of mortality—but Kunaastrokius, you say, was a great man—'tis that very circumstance which makes the pleasantry—for I could name at this in-

stant a score of honest gentlemen who might have done the very thing which Kunaſtrokius did, and seen no joke in it at all—as to the failing of Kunaſtrokius, which you say can only be imputed to his friends as a misfortune—I see nothing like a misfortune in it to any friend or relation of Kunaſtrokius—that Kunaſtrokius upon occasions should sit with \*\*\* \*\*\*\* and \*\*\*\*\* —— I have put these ſtars not *to hurt your worſhip's delicacy*—If Kunaſtrokius after all is too ſacred a character to be even ſmiled at, (which is all I have done) he has had better luck than his betters:—In the ſame page (without imputation of cowardice) I have ſaid as much of a man of twice his wiſdom—and that is Solomon, of whom I have made the ſame remark “That they were both great men—and like all mortal men had each their ruling paſſion.”

——The conſolation you give me, “That my book however will be read enough to answer my deſign of raiſing a tax upon the public” —is very unconſolatory—to ſay nothing how very mortifying! by h——n! an author is worſe treated than a common whore at this rate—“*You will get a penny by your ſins, and that's enough.*” —Upon this chapter let me comment.—That I propoſed laying the world under contribution when I ſet pen to paper—is what I own, and I ſuppoſe I may be allow'd to have that view in my head in common with every other writer, to make my labour of advantage to myſelf.

Do not you do the ſame? but I beg I may add, that whatever views I had of that kind, I had other views—the firſt of which was, the hopes of doing the world good by ridiculing what I thought deſerving of it—or of diſſervice to ſound learning, &c.—how I have ſucceeded

my book must shew—and this I leave entirely to the world—but not to that little world of *your acquaintance*, whose opinion, and sentiments you call the general opinion of the best judges *without exception*, who all affirm (you say) that my book cannot be put into the hands of any woman of *character*. (I hope you except widows, doctor—for they are not *all* so squeamish—but I am told they are all really of my party in return for some good offices done their interests in the 176th page of my second volume) But for the chaste married, and chaste unmarried part of the sex—they must not read my book! Heaven forbid the stock of chastity should be lessen'd by the life and opinions of Tristram Shandy—yes, his opinions—it would certainly debauch 'em! God take them under his protection in this fiery trial, and send us plenty of Duenas to watch the workings of their humours, 'till they have safely got thro' the whole work.—If this will not be sufficient, may we have plenty of Sangrados to pour in plenty of cold water, till this terrible fermentation is over—as for the *nummum in loculo*, which you mention to me a second time, I fear you think me very poor, or in debt—I thank God tho' I don't abound—that I have enough for a clean shirt every day—and a mutton chop—and my contentment with this, has thus far (and I hope ever will) put me above stooping an inch for it, for—estate.—Curse on it, I like it not to that degree, nor envy (*you may be sure*) any man who kneels in the dirt for it—so that howsoever I may fall short of the ends proposed in commencing author—I enter this *protest*, first that my end was *honest*, and secondly, that I wrote not to be *fed*, but to be *famous*. I am much obliged to Mr. Garrick for his very favourable opinion—but why, dear Sir, had he done better in finding fault with it than in commending it? to

humble me? an author is not so soon humbled as you imagine—no, but to make the book better by castrations—that is still *sub judice*, and I can assure you upon this chapter, that the very passages, and descriptions you propose, that I should sacrifice in my second edition, are what are best relish'd by men of wit, and some others whom I esteem as sound criticks—so that upon the whole, I am still kept up, if not above fear, at least above despair, and have seen enough to shew me the folly of an attempt of castrating my book to the prudish humours of particulars. I believe the short cut would be to publish this letter at the beginning of the third volume, as an apology for the first and second. I was sorry to find a censure upon the insincerity of some of my friends—I have no reason myself to reproach any one man—my friends have continued in the same opinions of my books which they first gave me of them—many indeed have thought better of 'em, by considering them more; few worse.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

LAURENCE STERNE.



LETTER XIII.

To Dr. Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester.

York, June 9, 1760.

My Lord,

**N**OT knowing where to send two sets of my Sermons, I could think of no better expedient, than to order them into Mr. Berrenger's hands, who has promised me that he will wait upon your Lordship with them, the first moment he hears you are in town. The truest and humblest thanks I return to your Lordship, for the generosity of your protection, and advice to me; by making a good use of the one, I will hope to deserve the other; I wish your Lordship all the health and happiness in this world, for I am

Your Lordship's

Most obliged and

Most grateful Servant,

L. STERNE.

P. S. I am just sitting down to go on with *Tristram*, &c.—the scribblers use me ill, but they have used my betters much worse, for which may God forgive them.

## LETTER XIV.

To the Rev. Mr. STERNE.

Prior-Park, June 15, 1760.

Reverend Sir,

I HAVE your favour of the 9th Instant, and am glad to understand, you are got safe home, and employ'd again in your proper studies and amusements. You have it in your power to make that, which is an amusement to yourself and others, useful to both: at least, you should above all things, beware of its becoming hurtful to either, by any violations of decency and good manners; but I have already taken such repeated liberties of advising you on that head, that to say more would be needless, or perhaps unacceptable.

Whoever, is, in any way, well received by the public is sure to be annoy'd by that pest of the public, *profligate scribblers*. This is the common lot of successful adventurers; but such have often a worse evil to struggle with, I mean the over-officiousness of their indiscreet friends. There are two Odes, as they are call'd, printed by Dodsley. Whoever was the author, he appears to be a monster of impiety and lewdness—yet such is the malignity of the scribblers, some have given them to your friend Hall; and others, which is still more impossible, to yourself; tho' the first Ode has the insolence to place you both in a mean and a ridiculous light. But this might arise from a



tale equally groundless and malignant, that you had shewn them to your acquaintances in *M. S.* before they were given to the public. Nor was their being printed by Dodsley the likeliest means of discrediting the calumny.

About this time, another, under the mask of friendship, pretended to draw your character, which was since published in a *Female Magazine*, (for dulness, who often has as great a hand as the devil, in deforming God's works of the creation, has *made them*, it seems, *male and female*) and from thence it was transformed into a *Chronicle*. Pray have you read it, or do you know its author?

But of all these things, I dare say Mr. Garrick, whose prudence is equal to his honesty or his talents, has remonstrated to you with the freedom of a friend. He knows the inconstancy of what is called the Public, towards all, even the best intentioned, of those who contribute to its pleasure, or amusement. He (as every man of honour and discretion would) has availed himself of the public favour, to regulate the taste, and, in his proper station, to reform the manners of the fashionable world; while by a well judged œconomy, he has provided against the temptations of a mean and servile dependency, on the follies and vices of the great.

In a word, be assured, there is no one more sincerely wishes your welfare and happiness, than,

Reverend Sir,

W. G.

## LETTER XIV\*.

To my Witty Widow, Mrs. Ferguson.

Coxwould, Aug. 3, 1760.

Madam,

WHEN a man's brains are as dry as a squeez'd Orange—and he feels he has no more conceit in him than a Mallet, 'tis in vain to think of sitting down, and writing a letter to a lady of your wit, unless in the honest John-Trot-Stile of, *yours of the 15th instant came safe to hand, &c.* which, by the bye, looks like a letter of business; and you know very well, from the first letter I had the honour to write to you, I am a man of no business at all. This vile plight I found my genius in, was the reason I have told Mr. —, I would not write to you till the next post—hoping, by that time to get some small recruit, at least of vivacity, if not wit, to set out with;—but upon second thoughts, thinking a bad letter in season—to be better than a good one, out of it—this scrawl is the consequence, which, if you will burn the moment you get it—I promise to send you a fine set essay in the stile of your female epistolizers, cut and trim'd at all points.—God defend me from such, who never yet knew what it was to say or write one premeditated word in my whole life—for this reason I send you with pleasure, because wrote with the careless irregularity of an easy heart.—Who told you Garrick wrote the medley for Beard? --- 'Twas wrote in his house, however, and before I left town.—I deny it. --- I wasnot lost two days before I left town. --- I was lost all the time I was there, and

never found till I got to this Shandy castle of mine. --- Next winter I intend to sojourn amongst you with more decorum, and will neither be lost or found any where.

Now I wish to God, I was at your elbow—I have just finished one volume of Shandy, and I want to read it to some one who I know can taste and relish humour—this by the way, is a little impudent in me—for I take the thing for granted, which their high mightinesses the world have yet to determine—but I mean no such thing—I could wish only to have your opinion—shall I, in truth, give you mine?—I dare not—but I will; provided you keep it to yourself—know then, that I think there is more laughable humour,—with equal degree of Cervantick satire—if not more than in the last—but we are bad judges of the merit of our children.

I return you a thousand thanks for your friendly congratulations upon my habitation—and I will take care, you shall never wish me but well, for I am, madam,

With great esteem and truth,

Your most obliged

L. STERNE.

P. S. I have wrote this so vilely and so precipitately, I fear you must carry it to a decypherer—I beg you'll do me the honour to write—otherwise you draw *me* in, instead of Mr.—drawing *you* into a scrape—for I should sorrow to have a *taste* of so agreeable a correspondent—and *no more*.

Adieu.

## LETTER XV.

To Lady —.

Coxwold, Sept, 21, 1761.

**I** RETURN to my new habitation, fully determined to write as hard as can be, and thank you most cordially, my dear lady, for your letter of congratulation upon my Lord Fauconberg's having presented me with the curacy of this place—though your congratulation comes somewhat of the latest, as I have been possessed of it some time.—I hope I have been of some service to his Lordship, and he has sufficiently requited me.—'Tis seventy guineas a year in my pocket, though worth a hundred—but it obliges me to have a curate to officiate at Surton and Stillington.—'Tis within a mile of his Lordship's seat and park. 'Tis a very agreeable ride out in the chaise, I purchased for my wife—Lyd has a poney which she delights in.—Whilst they take these diversions, I am scribbling away at my Tristram. These two volumes are, I think, the best.—I shall write as long as I live, 'tis, in fact, my hobby-horse: and so much am I delighted with my uncle Toby's imaginary character, that I am become an enthusiast. --- My Lydia helps to copy for me --- and my wife knits and listens as I read her chapters. --- The coronation of his Majesty (whom God preserve!) has cost me the value of an Ox, which is to be roasted whole in the middle of the town, and my parishioners will, I suppose, be very merry upon the occasion.—You will then be in town --- and feast your eyes with a sight, which 'tis to be hoped will not be in either of our powers to see again—

for in point of age we have about twenty years the start of his Majesty.—And now, my dear friend, I must finish this—and with every wish for your happiness conclude myself your most sincere well-wisher and friend,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XVI.

To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.

Coxwould, [about August], 1761.

Dear Hall,

**I** REJOICE you are in London—rest you there in peace; here 'tis the devil. --- You was a good prophet. --- I wish myself back again, as you told me I should --- but not because a thin, death-doing pestiferous north-east wind blows in a line directly from crazy-castle turret full upon me in this cuckoldly retreat, (for I value the north-east wind and all its powers not a straw)—but the transition from rapid motion to absolute rest was too violent.—I should have walked about the streets of York ten days, as a proper medium to have passed thro', before I entered upon my rest.—I staid but a moment, and I have been here but a few, to satisfy me I have not managed my miseries like a wise man—and if God, for my consolation under them, had not poured forth the spirit of Shandatism into me, which will not suffer me to think two moments upon any grave subject, I would else, just now lay down and die—die—and yet, in half an hour's time, I'll

lay a guinea, I shall be as merry as a monkey—and as mischievous too, and forget it all --- so that this is but a copy of the present train running cross my brain.—And so you think this cursed stupid—but that, my dear Hall depends much upon the *quotâ horâ* of your shabby clock, if the pointer of it is in any quarter between ten in the morning or four in the afternoon--- I give it up---or if the day is obscured by dark engendering clouds of either wet or dry weather, I am still lost ---but who knows but it may be five--- and the day as fine a day as ever shone upon the earth since the destruction of Sodom --- and peradventure your honour may have got a good hearty dinner to-day, and eat and drank your intellectuals into a placidulish and a blandulish amalgama --- to bear nonsense, so much for that.

'Tis as cold and churlish just now, as (if God had not pleased it to be so) it ought to have been in bleak December, and therefore I am glad you are where you are, and where (I repeat it again) I wish I was also—Curse of poverty, and absence from those we love!—they are two great evils which embitter all things—and yet with the first I am not haunted much.—As to matrimony, I should be a beast to rail at it, for my wife is easy—but the world is not—and had I staid from her a second longer it would have been a burning shame—else she declares herself happier without me—but not in anger is this declaration made--- but in pure sober good-sense, built on sound experience—she hopes you will be able to strike a bargain for me before this time twelvemonth, to lead a bear round Europe: and from this hope from you, I verily believe it is, that you are so high in her favour at present. --- She swears you are a fellow of wit, though humourous; a fun-



ny jolly soul, though somewhat splenetic; and (bating the love of women) as honest as *gold*—how do you like the simile?—Oh, Lord! now are you going to Ranelagh to-night, and I am sitting, sorrowful as the prophet was when the voice cried out to him and said, “What do’st thou here, Elijah?”—’Tis well the spirit does not make the same at Coxwold—for unless for the few sheep left me to take care of, in this wilderness, I might as well, nay better, be at Mecca --- When we find we can by a shifting of places, run away from ourselves, what think you of a jaunt there, before we finally pay a visit to the *vale of Jebosopbat*—As ill a fame as we have, I trust I shall one day or other see you face to face—so tell the two colonels, if they love good company, to live righteously and soberly, as *you do*, and then they will have no doubts or dangers within, or without them—present my best and warmest wishes to them, and advise the eldest to prop up his spirits, and get a rich dowager before the conclusion of the peace—why will not the advice suit both, *par nobile fratrum*?

To-morrow morning, (if Heaven permit) I begin the fifth volume of *Shandy*—I care not a curse for the critics—I’ll load my vehicle with what goods *he* sends me, and they may take ’em off my hands, or let them alone—I am very valourous --- and ’tis in proportion as we retire from the world and see it in its true dimensions, that we despise it --- no bad rant! --- God above bless you! You know I am

Your affectionate Cousin,

LAURENCE STERNE.

What few remain of the Demoniacs, greet—and write me a letter, if you are able, as foolish as this.

## LETTER XVII.

To David Garrick, Esq.

Paris, Jan. 31, 1762.

My dear Friend,

**T**HINK not that because I have been a fortnight in this metropolis without writing to you, that therefore I have not had you and Mrs. Garrick a hundred times in my head and heart—heart! yes, yes, say you --- but I must not waste paper in *badinage* this post, whatever I do the next. Well! here I am, my friend, as much improved in my health for the time, as ever your friendship could wish, or at least your faith give credit to—by the bye I am somewhat worse in my intellectuals, for my head is turned round with what I see, and the unexpected honours I have met with here. Tristram was almost as much known here as in London, at least among your men of condition and learning, and has got me introduced into so many circles ('tis *comme à Londres*.) I have just now a fortnight's dinners and suppers upon my hands—My application to the Count de Choiseul goes on swimmingly, for not only Mr. Pelletiere, (who, by the bye, sends ten thousand civilities to you, and Mrs. Garrick) has undertaken my affair, but the Count de Limbourg—the Baron d'Holbach, has offered any security for the inoffensiveness of my behaviour in France—'tis more, you rogue! than you will do—This Baron is one of the most learned noblemen here, the great protector of wits,



and the Scavans who are no wits—keeps open house three days a week—his house is now, as yours was to me, my own—he lives at great expence---’Twas an odd incident when I was introduced to the Count de Bissie, which I was at his desire—I found him reading *Tristram*—this grandee does me great honours, and gives me leave to go a private way through his apartments into the palais royal, to view the Duke of Orleans’ collections, every day I have time—I have been at the doctors of Sorbonne—I hope in a fortnight to break through, or rather from, the delights of this place, which in the *scavoir vivre*, exceed all the places I believe, in this section of the globe——

I am going, when this letter is wrote, with Mr. Fox, and Mr. Maccartny to Versailles—the next morning I wait upon Monsr. Titon, in company with Mr. Maccartny, who is known to him, to deliver your commands. I have bought you the pamphlet upon theatrical, or rather tragical, declamation—I have bought another in verse, worth reading, and you will receive them, with what I can pick up this week, by a servant of Mr. Hodges, who he is sending back to England.

I was last night with Mr. Fox to see Madle. Clairon, in *Iphigene*—she is extremely great—would to God you had one or two like her—what a luxury, to see you with one of such powers in the same interesting scene—but ’tis too much—Ah! Preville! thou art Mercury himself—By virtue of taking a couple of boxes, we have bespoke this week *The Frenchman in London*, in which Preville is to send us home to supper, *all bappy*—I mean about fifteen or sixteen English of distinction, who are now here, and live well with each other.

I am under great obligations to Mr. Pitt, who has behaved in every respect to me like a man of good breeding and good nature—In a post or two I will write again—Foley is an honest soul—I could write six volumes of what has passed comically in this great scene, since these last fourteen days—but more of this hereafter—We are all going into mourning; nor you, nor Mrs. Garrick would know me, if you met me in my *remise*—bless you both! Service to Mrs. Denis. Adieu, adieu!

L. S.

## LETTER XVIII.

To Lady D——

London,<sup>1</sup> Feb. 1, 1762.

YOUR Ladyship's kind enquiries after my health is indeed kind, and of a piece with the rest of your character. Indeed I am very ill, having broke a vessel in my lungs—hard writing in the summer, together with preaching, which I have not strength for, is ever fatal to me—but I cannot avoid the latter yet, and the former is too pleasurable to be given up--- I believe I shall try if the south of France will not be of service to me--- his Grace of York has most humanely given me the permission for a year or two--- I shall set off with great hopes of its efficacy, and shall write to my wife and daughter to come and join me at Paris, else my stay could not be so long--- “Le Fever's story has beguiled your ladyship of your tears,” and the thought of the accusing spirit flying up to heaven's

<sup>1</sup> This Letter, though dated from *London*, was evidently written from *Paris*.

chancery with the oath, you are kind enough to say is sublime --- my friend, Mr. Garrick, thinks so too, and I am most vain of his approbation --- your ladyship's opinion adds not a little to my vanity.

I wish I had time to take a little excursion to Bath, were it only to thank you for all the obliging things you say in your letter --- but 'tis impossible --- accept at least my warmest thanks --- If I could tempt my friend, Mr. Hall to come to France, I should be truly happy --- If I can be of any service to you at Paris, command him who is, and ever will be,

Your Ladyship's faithful,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XIX.

To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.

Coxwould, July 28, 1761

Dear Hall,

**I** SYMPATHIZED for, or with you, on the detail you give me of your late agitations—and would willingly have taken my horse, and trotted to the oracle to have enquired into the etymology of all your sufferings, had I not been assured, that all that evacuation of bilious matter, with all that abdomical motion attending it (both which are equal to a month's purgation and exercise) will have left you better than it found you --- Need one go to <sup>1</sup>D—— to be told that all kind of mild, (mark, I am go-

<sup>1</sup>Probably, Dr. Dealtry.

ing to talk more foolishly than your apothecary) opening, saponacious, dirty-shirt, sud-washing liquors are proper for you, and consequently all styptical potations, death and destruction --- if you had not shut up your gall-ducts by these, the glauber salts could not have hurt --- as it was, 'twas like a match to the gunpowder, by raising a fresh combustion, as all physic does at first, so that you have been let off --- nitre, brimstone, and charcoal, (which is blackness itself) all at one blast --- 'twas well the piece did not burst, for I think it underwent great violence, and, as it is proof, will, I hope, do much service in this militating world—Panty<sup>1</sup> is mistaken, I quarrel with no one.—There was that coxcomb of —— in the house, who lost temper with me for no reason upon earth but that I could not fall down and worship a brazen image of learning and eloquence, which he set up to the persecution of all true believers—I sat down upon *his altar*, and whistled in the time of his divine service—and broke down his carved work, and kicked his incense pot to the D——, so he retreated, *sed non sine felle in corde suo*. --- I have wrote a clementum, whether I shall take my doctor's degrees or no --- I am much in doubt, but I trow not. --- I go on with Tristram --- I have bought seven hundred books at a purchase dog cheap --- and many good --- and I have been a week getting them set up in my best room here --- why do not you transport yours to town, but I talk like a fool.—This will just catch you at your spaw --- I wish you *incolumem apud Londinum*—do you go there for good and all --- or ill? --- I am, dear couisn,

Yours affectionately,

L. STERNE.

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Robert Lascelles.

LETTER XX.

To David Garrick, Esq.

Paris, March 19, 1762.

Dear Garrick,

THIS will be put into your hands by Doctor Shippen, a physician, who has been here some time with Miss Poyntz, and is this moment setting off for your metropolis, so I snatch the opportunity of writing to you and my kind friend Mrs. Garrick—I see nothing like her here, and yet I have been introduced to one half of their best Goddesses, and in a month more shall be admitted to the shrines of the other half—but I neither worship—or fall (much) upon my knees before them; but, on the contrary, have converted many unto Shandeism—for be it known I Shandy it away fifty times more than I was ever wont, talk more nonsense than ever you heard me talk in your days—and to all sorts of people. *Qui le diable est ce homme là*—said Choiseul, t’other day—ce Chevalier Shandy—You’ll think me as vain as a devil, was I to tell you the rest of the dialogue—whether the bearer knows it or no, I know not—’Twill serve up after supper, in Southampton-street, amongst other small dishes, after the fatigues of Richard the II<sup>d</sup>—O God! they have nothing here, which gives the nerves so smart a blow, as those great characters in the hands of Garrick! but I forgot I am writing to the man himself——The devil take (as he will) these transports of enthusiasm! apropos—

the whole City of Paris is *bewitch'd* with the comic opera, and if it was not for the affairs of the Jesuits, which takes up one half of our talk, the comic opera would have it all—It is a tragical nuisance in all companies as it is, and was it not for some sudden starts and dashes --- of Shandehism, which now and then either breaks the thread, or entangles it so, that the devil himself would be puzzled in winding it off—I should die a martyr—this by the way I never will——

I send you over some of these comic operas by the bearer, with the *Sallon*, a satire—The French comedy, I seldom visit it—they act scarce any thing but tragedies—and the Clairon is great, and Madlle. Dumesnil, in some places, still greater than her—yet I cannot bear preaching—I fancy I got a surfeit of it in my younger days.—There is a tragedy to be damn'd to-night—peace be with it, and the gentle brain which made it! I have ten thousand things to tell you, I cannot write--- I do a thousand things which cut no figure, *but in the doing*—and as in London, I have the honour of having done and said a thousand things I never did or dream'd of—and yet I dream abundantly --- If the devil stood behind me in the shape of a courier, I could not write faster than I do, having five letters more to dispatch by the same Gentleman; he is going into another section of the globe, and when he has seen you, he will depart in peace.

The Duke of Orleans has suffered my portrait to be added to the number of some odd men in his collection; and a gentleman who lives with him has taken it most expressively, at full length--- I purpose to obtain an etching of it, and to send it you --- your prayer for me of *rosy health*,



is heard --- If I stay here for three or four months, I shall return more than reinstated. My love to Mrs. Garrick.

I am, my dear Garrick,

Your most humble Servant,

L. STERNE.

# LETTER XXI.

To the same.

Paris, April 10, 1762.

My dear Garrick,

**I** SNATCH the occasion of Mr. Wilcox (the late Bishop of Rochester's son) leaving this place for England, to write to you, and I inclose it to Hall, who will put it into your hand, possibly behind the scenes. I hear no news of you, or your *empire*, I would have said *kingdom* --- but here every thing is hyperbolized --- and if a woman is but simply pleased --- 'tis *je suis charmée* --- and if she is charmed 'tis nothing less, than that she is *ravi-sh'd* --- and when ravi-sh'd, (which may happen) there is nothing left for her but to fly to the other world for a metaphor, and swear, qu'elle etoit toute *extasiée* --- which mode of speaking, is, by the bye, here creeping into use, and there is scarce a woman who understands the *bon ton*, but is seven times in a day in downright extasy --- that is, the devil's in her --- by a small mistake of one world for the other --- Now, where am I got?

I have been these two days reading a tragedy, given me by a lady of talents to read, and conjecture if it would do for you --- 'Tis from the plan of Diderot, and possibly half a translation of it --- The Natural Son, or, the Triumph of Virtue, in five acts—It has too much sentiment in it, (at least for me) the speeches too long, and savour too much of *preaching* --- this may be a second reason, it is not to my taste --- 'Tis all love, love, love, throughout, without much separation in the character; so I fear it would not do for your stage, and perhaps for the very reasons which recommend it to a French one. --- After a vile suspension of three weeks—we are beginning with our comedies and operas again—yours I hear never flourished more—here the comic actors were never so low—the tragedians hold up their heads—in all senses. I have known *one little man* support the theatrical world, like a David Atlas, upon his shoulders, but Preville can't do half as much here, though Mad. Clairon stands by him, and sets her back to his—she is very great, however, and highly improved since you saw her—she also supports her dignity at table, and has her public day every Thursday, when she *gives to eat*, (as they say here) to all that are hungry and dry.

You are much talked of here, and much expected as soon as the peace will let you—these two last days you have happened to engross the whole conversation at two great houses where I was at dinner—'Tis the greatest problem in nature, in this meridian, that one and the same man should possess such tragic and comic powers, and in such an equilibrio, as to divide the world for which of the two nature intended him.

Crebillion has made a convention with me, which, if he



is not too lazy, will be no bad *persiflage*—as soon as I get to Toulouse he has agreed to write me an expostulatory letter upon the indecorums of T. Shandy—which is to be answered by recrimination upon the liberties in his own works—these are to be printed together - - - Crebillon against Sterne—Sterne against Crebillon - - - the copy to be sold, and the money equally divided - - - This is good Swiss-policy.

I am recovered greatly, and if I could spend one whole winter at Toulouse, I should be fortified, in my inner man, beyond all danger of relapsing.—A sad asthma my daughter has been martyr'd with these three winters, but mostly this last, makes it, I fear, necessary she should try the last remedy of a warmer and softer air, so I am going this week to Versailles, to wait upon Count Choiseul to solicit passports for them - - - If this system takes place, they join me here - - - and after a month's stay we all decamp for the south of France - - - if not, I shall see you in June next. Mr. Fox, and Mr. Maccartny, having left Paris, I live altogether in French families - - - I laugh 'till I cry, and in the same tender moments *cry 'till I laugh*. I Shandy it more than ever, and verily do believe, that by mere Shandeism sublimated by a laughter-loving people, I fence as much against infirmities, as I do by the benefit of air and climate. Adieu, dear Garrick, present ten thousand of my best respects and wishes to and for my friend Mrs. Garrick—had she been last night upon the Tuilleries, she would have annihilated a thousand French goddesses, *in one single turn*.

I am most truly,

my dear friend,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XXII.

To Mrs. Sterne, York.

Paris, May 16th, 1762.

My Dear,

**I**T is a thousand to one that this reaches you before you have set out --- However I take the chance --- you will receive one wrote last night, the moment you get to Mr. Edmundson and to wish you joy of your arrival in town --- to that letter which you will find in town, I have nothing to add that I can think on --- for I have almost drain'd my brains dry upon the subject. --- For God sake rise early and gallop away in the cool --- and always see that you have not forgot your baggage in changing post-chaises--- You will find good tea upon the road from York to Dover --- only bring a little to carry you from Calais to Paris --- give the Custom-House officers what I told you --- at Calais give more, if you have much Scotch snuff --- but as tobacco is good here, you had best bring a Scotch mill and make it yourself, that is, order your valet to manufacture it --- 'twill keep him out of mischief. — I would advise you to take three days in coming up, for fear of heating yourselves --- See that they do not give you a bad vehicle, when a better is in the yard, but you will look sharp --- drink small Rhenish to keep you cool, (that is if you like it.) Live well and deny yourselves nothing your hearts wish. So God in heav'n prosper and go along with you --- kiss my Lydia, and believe me both affectionately,

Yours,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XXIII.

To the same.

Paris, May 31, 1762.

My Dear,

THERE have no mails arrived here 'till this morning, for three posts, so I expected with great impatience a letter from you and Lydia---and lo! it is arrived. You are as busy as Throp's wife, and by the time you receive this, you will be busier still---I have exhausted all my ideas about your journey---and what is needful for you to do before and during it---so I write only to tell you I am well --- Mr. Colebrooks, the minister of Swisserland's secretary, I got this morning to write a letter for you to the governor of the Custom-House-Office, at Calais---it shall be sent you next post.---You must be cautious about Scotch snuff---take half a pound in your pocket, and make Lyd do the same. 'Tis well I bought you a chaise---there is no getting one in Paris now, but at an enormous price---for they are all sent to the army, and such a one as yours we have not been able to match for forty guineas; for a friend of mine who is going from hence to Italy---the weather was never known to set in so hot, as it has done the latter end of this month, so he and his party are to get into his chaises by four in the morning, and travel 'till nine---and not stir out again till six; but I hope this severe heat will abate by the time you come here---however I beg of you once more to take special care of heating your blood in travelling and come *tout doucement*, when you find the heat too much---I shall look impati-

ently for intelligence from you, and hope to hear all goes well; that you conquer all difficulties, that you have received your pass-port, my picture, &c. Write and tell me something of every thing. I long to see you both, you may be assured, my dear wife and child, after so long a separation——and write me a line directly, that I may have all the notice you can give me, that I may have apartments ready and fit for you when you arrive.—For my own part I shall continue writing to you a fortnight longer—present my respects to all friends—you have bid Mr. Croft get my visitations at Pickering and Pocklington done for me, &c. &c. If any offers are made about the inclosure at Rascal, they must be enclosed to me—nothing that is fairly proposed shall stand still on my score. Do all for the best, as He who guides all things, will I hope do for us --- so Heaven preserve you both --- believe me

Your affectionate

L. STERNE.

Love to my Lydia--- I have bought her a gold watch to present to her when she comes.

## LETTER XXIV.

To the same.

Paris, June 7, 1762.

My Dear,

**I** KEEP my promise and write to you again --- I am sorry the bureau must be open'd for the deeds --- but you will see it done --- I imagine you are convinced of the necessity of bringing three hundred pounds in your pocket --- if you consider, Lydia must have two slight negligees --- you will want a new gown or two --- as for painted linens buy them in town, they will be more admired because English than French. --- Mrs. Hewitt writes me word that I am mistaken about buying silk cheaper at Toulouse, than Paris, that she advises you to buy what you want here --- where they are very beautiful and cheap, as well as blonds, gauzes, &c. --- these I say will all cost you sixty guineas --- and you must have them --- for in this country nothing must be spared for the back --- and if you dine on an onion, and lie in a garret seven stories high, you must not betray it in your cloaths, according to which you are well or ill look'd on. When we are got to Toulouse, we must begin to turn the penny, and we may, (if you do not game much) live very cheap --- I think that expression will divert you --- and now God knows I have not a wish but for your health, comfort, and safe arrival here --- write to me every other post, that I may know how you go on --- you will be in raptures with your chariot --- Mr.

R. a gentleman of fortune, who is going to Italy, and has seen it, has offered me thirty guineas for my bargain. --- You will wonder all the way, how I am to find room in it for a third --- to ease you of this wonder, 'tis by what the coach-makers here call a cave, which is a second bottom added to that you set your feet upon, which lets the person (who sits over-against you) down with his knees to your ankles, and by which you have all more room --- and what is more, less heat --- because his head does not intercept the fore-glass --- little or nothing --- I yd and I will enjoy this by turns; sometimes I shall take a bider --- (a little post horse) and scamper before --- at other times I shall sit in fresco upon the arm-chair without doors, and one way or other will do very well.—I am under infinite obligations to Mr. Thornhill, for accommodating me thus, and so genteely, for 'tis like making a present of it.—Mr. T——will send you an order to receive it at Calais—and now, my dear girls, have I forgot any thing?

Adieu, adieu!

Yours most affectionately,

L. STERNE.

A week or ten days will enable you to see every thing—and so long you must stay to rest your bones.



## LETTER XXV.

To the same.

Paris, June 14, 1762.

My dearest,

**H**AVING an opportunity of writing by a friend who is setting out this morning for London, I write again, in case the two last letters I have wrote this week to you should be detained by contrary winds at Calais—I have wrote to Mr. Edmundson, by the same hand, to thank him for his kindness to you in the handsomest manner I could—and have told him, his good heart, and his wife's, have made them overlook the trouble of having you at his house, but that if he takes you apartments near him, they will have occasion still enough left to shew their friendship to us—I have begged him to assist you, and stand by you as if he was in my place, with regard to the sale of the Shandys—and then the copy-right—Mark to keep these things distinct in your head—but Becket I have ever found to be a man of probity, and I dare say you will have very little trouble in finishing matters with him—and I would rather wish you to treat with him than with another man—but whoever buys the fifth and sixth volumes of Shandy's, must have the nay-say of the seventh and eighth.—I wish, when you come here, in case the weather is too hot to travel, you could think it pleasant to go to the Spaw for four or six weeks, where we should live for half the money we should spend at Paris



--- after that, we should take the sweetest season of the vintage to go to the south of France---but we will put our heads together, and you shall just do as you please in this, and in every thing which depends on me---for I am a being perfectly contented, when others are pleased --- to bear and forbear will ever be my maxim---only I fear the heats through a journey of five hundred miles for you, and my Lydia, more than for myself. --- Do not forget the watch chains --- bring a couple for a gentleman's watch likewise; we shall lie under great obligations to the Abbé Mackarty and must make him such a small acknowledgement; according to my way of flourishing, 'twill be a present worth a kingdom to him--- They have bad pins, and vile needles here --- bring for yourself, and some for presents --- as also a strong bottle-skrew, for whatever Scrub we may hire as butler, coachman, &c. to uncork us our Frontiniac--- You will find a letter for you at the Lyon D'Argent--- Send for your chaise into the court-yard, and see all is tight --- Buy a chain at Calais strong enough not to be cut off, and let your portmanteau be tied on the fore-part of your chaise for fear of a dog's trick--- so God bless you both, and remember me to my Lydia,

I am yours affectionately,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XXVI.

To the same.

Paris, June 17, 1762.

My dearest,

**P**ROBABLY you will receive another letter with this, by the same post, if so read this the last --- It will be the last you can possibly receive at York, for I hope it will catch you just as you are upon the wing --- if that should happen, I suppose in course you have executed the contents of it, in all things which relate to pecuniary matters, and when these are settled to your mind, you will have got thro' your last difficulty --- every thing else will be a step of pleasure, and by the time you have got half a dozen stages, you will set up your pipes and sing *Te Deum* together, as you whisk it along. --- Desire Mr. Croft to send me a proper letter of attorney by you, he will receive it back by return of post. You have done every thing well with regard to our Sutton and Stillington affairs, and left things in the best channel—if I was not sure you must have long since got my picture, garnets, &c. I would write and scold Mr. Tollot abominably—he put them in Becket's hands to be forwarded by the stage coach to you, as soon as he got to town.—I long to hear from you, and that all my letters and things are come safe to you, and then you will say that I have not been a bad lad—for you will find I have been writing continually, as I wished you to do—Bring your silver cof-

fee-pot, 'twill serve both to give water, lemonade, and orjead—to say nothing of coffee and chocolate, which, by the bye, is both cheap and good at Toulouse, like other things--- I had like to have forgot a most necessary thing, there are no copper tea-kettles to be had in France, and we shall find such a thing the most comfortable utensil in in the house --- buy a good strong one, which will hold two quarts --- a dish of tea will be of comfort to us in our journey south—I have a bronze tea-pot, which we will carry also, as china cannot be brought over from England, we must make up a villainous party-coloured tea equipage to regale ourselves, and our English friends, whilst we are at Toulouse—I hope you have got your bill from Becket.—There is a good natured kind of a trader I have just heard of, at Mr. Foley's, who they think will be coming off from England to France, with horses, the latter end of June. He happened to come over with a lady, who is sister to Mr. Foley's partner, and I have got her to write a letter to him in London, this post, to beg he will seek you out at Mr. Edmundson's, and in case a cartel ship does not go off before he goes, to take you under his care. He was infinitely friendly, in the same office, last year, to the lady who now writes to him, and nursed her on ship-board, and defended her by land with great goodwill. --- Do not say I forget you, or whatever can be conducive to your ease of mind, in this journey—I wish I was with you, to do these offices myself, and to strew roses on your way—but I shall have time and occasion to shew you I am not wanting—Now, my dears, once more pluck up your spirits—trust in God—in me—and in yourselves—with this, was you put to it, you would encounter all these difficulties ten times told—Write instantly, and tell me you triumph over all fears; tell me Lydia is better, and

a help-mate to you—You say she grows like me—let her shew me she does so in her contempt of small dangers, and fighting against the apprehensions of them, which is better still. As I will not have F.'s share of the books, you will inform him so—Give my love to Mr. Fothergill, and to those true friends which Envy has spared me—and for the rest, *laissés passer*--- You will find I speak French tolerably--- but I only wish to be understood.--- You will soon speak better; a month's play with a French Demoiselle will make Lyd chatter it like a magpye. Mrs. —— understood not a word of it when she got here, and writes me word she begins to prate apace—you will do the same in a fortnight—Dear Bess, I have a thousand wishes, but have a hope for every one of them—You shall chant the same *jubilate*, my dears, so God bless you. My duty to Lydia, which implies my love too. Adieu, believe me

Your affectionate,

L. STERNE.

Memorandum: Bring watch-chains, tea-kettle, knives, cookery book, &c.

You will smile at this last article—so adieu—At Dover, the Cross Keys, at Calais, at the Lyon D'Argent—the master, a Turk in grain.

## LETTER XXVII.

To Lady D.

Paris, July 9, 1762.

I WILL not send your ladyship the trifles you bid me purchase without a line. I am very well pleased with Paris—indeed I meet with so many civilities amongst the people here that I must sing their praises—the French have a great deal of urbanity in their composition, and to stay a little time amongst them will be agreeable.—I splutter French so as to be understood—but I have had a droll adventure here in which my Latin was of some service to me—I had hired a chaise and a horse to go about seven miles into the country, but, *Shandean like*, did not notice that the horse was almost dead when I took him——Before I got half way the poor animal dropp'd down dead—so I was forced to appear before the Police, and began to tell my story in French, which was, that the poor beast had to do with a worse beast than himself, namely *his master*, who had driven him all the day before (*Jehu like*) and that he had neither had corn, or hay, therefore I was not to pay for the horse—but I might as well have whistled, as have spoke French, and I believe my Latin was equal to my uncle Toby's *Lilabulero*—being not understood because of it's purity, but by dint of words I forced my judge to do me justice—no common thing, by the way, in France.—My wife and daughter are arrived—the latter does nothing but look out of the window, and complain of the torment of being

frizled.—I wish she may ever remain a child of nature—I hate children of art.

I hope this will find your ladyship well—and that you will be kind enough to direct to me at Toulouse, which place I shall set out for very soon. I am, with truth and sincerity,

Your Ladyship's

Most faithful,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXVIII.

To Mr. Edmundson, in London.

Paris, July 12, 1762.

Dear Sir,

MY wife and daughter arrived here safe and sound on Thursday, and are in high raptures with the speed and pleasantness of their journey, and particularly of all they see and meet with here. But in their journey from York to Paris, nothing has given them a more sensible and lasting pleasure, than the marks of kindness they received from you and Mrs. Edmundson.—The friendship, good will and politeness of my two friends I never doubted to me, or mine, and I return you both all a grateful man is capable of, which is merely my thanks.

I have taken however the liberty of sending an Indian taffety, which Mrs. Edmundson must do me the honour to wear for my wife's sake, who would have got it made up, but that Mr. Stanhope, the Consul of Algiers, who sets off to-morrow morning for London, has been so kind (I mean his lady) as to take charge of it; and we had but just time to procure it: and had we miss'd that opportunity, as we should have been obliged to have left it behind us at Paris, we knew not when or how to get it to our friend.—I wish it had been better worth a paragraph. If there is any thing we can buy or procure for you here, (intelligence included) you have a right to command me—for I am yours, with my wife and girl's kind love to you and Mrs. Edmundson.

LAU. STERNE.

## LETTER XXIX.

To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.

Toulouse, August 12, 1762.

My dear Hall,

**B**Y the time you have got to the end of this long letter, you will perceive that I have not been able to answer your last 'till now --- I have had the intention of doing it almost as often as my prayers in my head—'tis thus we use our best friends—what an infamous story is that you have told me!—After some little remarks on it the rest of my letter will go on like silk. \*\*\*\*— is a good natured



The first of these is the fact that the  
 of the world is not a uniform one, but  
 is a complex of many different parts,  
 each of which has its own history and  
 its own character. The second is the fact  
 that the world is not a static one, but  
 is a dynamic one, in which things are  
 constantly changing and developing.  
 The third is the fact that the world is  
 not a homogeneous one, but is a  
 heterogeneous one, in which there are  
 many different kinds of people and  
 many different kinds of things. The  
 fourth is the fact that the world is  
 not a simple one, but is a complex  
 one, in which there are many different  
 kinds of problems and many different  
 kinds of solutions. The fifth is the fact  
 that the world is not a perfect one, but  
 is an imperfect one, in which there are  
 many different kinds of flaws and many  
 different kinds of imperfections. The  
 sixth is the fact that the world is not  
 a complete one, but is an incomplete  
 one, in which there are many different  
 kinds of things that are missing and  
 many different kinds of things that are  
 needed. The seventh is the fact that the  
 world is not a certain one, but is an  
 uncertain one, in which there are many  
 different kinds of possibilities and many  
 different kinds of uncertainties. The  
 eighth is the fact that the world is not  
 a certain one, but is an uncertain one,

year.--- I have got a good cook---my wife a decent *femme de chambre*, and a good looking *laquais*--- The Abbé has planned our expences, and set us in such a train, we cannot easily go wrong --- tho' by the bye the devil is seldom found sleeping under a hedge. Mr. Trotter dined with me the day before I left Paris—I took care to see all executed according to your directions--- but Trotter, I dare say, by this has wrote to you --- I made him happy beyond expression with your Crazy Tales, and more so with its frontispiece. --- I am in spirits, writing a crazy chapter---with my face turned towards thy turret--- 'Tis now I wish all warmer climates, countries, and every thing else at --- that separates me from our paternal seat --- *ce sera là où reposera ma cendre—et ce sera là où mon cousin viendra repondre les pleurs dues à notre amitié.* --- I am taking asses milk three times a day, and cows milk as often--- I long to see thy face again once more--- Greet the Colonel kindly in my name, and thank him cordially from me for his many civilities to Madame and Mademoiselle Shandy at York, who send all due acknowledgments. The humour is over for France, and Frenchmen, but that is not enough for your affectionate cousin,

L. S.

(A year will tire us all out I trow) but thank heaven the post brings me a letter from my Anthony --- I felicitate you upon what Messrs. the Reviewers allow you --- they have too much judgement themselves not to allow you what you are actually possess'd of, "talents, wit and humour." --- Well, write on my dear cousin, and be guided by thy own fancy. --- Oh! how I envy you all at Crazy Castle! --- I could like to spend a month with you --- and

should return back again for the vintage. --- I honour the man that has given the world an idea of our parental seat —'tis well done—I look at it ten times a day with a *quando te aspiciam?*—Now farewell—remember me to my beloved Colonel—greet Panty most lovingly on my behalf, and if Mrs. C . . . and Miss C . . . &c. are at G . . greet them likewise with a holy kiss --- So God bless you.

## LETTER XXX.

To Mr. Foley, at Paris.

Toulouse, August 14, 1762.

My dear Foley.

AFTER many turnings (*alias* digressions) to say nothing of downright overthrows, stops, and delays, we have arrived in three weeks at Toulouse, and are now settled in our houses with servants, &c. about us, and look as composed as if we had been here seven years.—— In our journey we suffered so much from the heats, it gives me pain to remember it --- I never saw a cloud from Paris to Nismes half as broad as a twenty-four sols piece. —Good God! we were toasted, roasted, grill'd, stew'd and carbonaded on one side or other all the way --- and being all done enough (*assez cuits*) in the day, we were eat up at night by bugs, and other unswept out vermin, the legal inhabitants (if length of possession gives right) of every inn we lay at.——Can you conceive a worse accident than that in such a journey, in the hottest day and

hour of it, four miles from either tree or shrub which could cast a shade of the size of one of Eve's fig leaves — — that we should break a hind wheel into ten thousand pieces, and be obliged in consequence to sit five hours on a gravelly road, without one drop of water, or possibility of getting any—To mend the matter, my two postillions were two dough-hearted fools, and fell a crying --- Nothing was to be done! By heaven, quoth I, pulling off my coat and waistcoat, something shall be done, for I'll thrash you both within an inch of your lives—and then make you take each of you a horse, and ride like two devils to the next post for a cart to carry my baggage, and a wheel to carry ourselves—Our luggage weighed ten quintals—'twas the fair of Baucaire --- all the world was going, or returning—we were ask'd by every soul who pass'd by us, if we were going to the fair of Baucaire—No wonder, quoth I, we have goods enough! *vous avez raison mes amis*—

Well! here we are after all, my dear friend --- and most deliciously placed at the extremity of the town, in an excellent house well furnish'd, and elegant beyond any thing I look'd for --- 'Tis built in the form of a hotel, with a pretty court towards the town --- and behind, the best gardens in Toulouse, laid out in serpentine walks, and so large that the company in our quarter usually come to walk there in the evenings, for which they have my consent --- “the more the merrier.” --- The house consists of a good *salle à manger* above stairs joining to the very great *salle à compagnie* as large as the Baron D'Holbach's; three handsome bed-chambers with dressing rooms to them—below stairs two very good rooms for myself, one to study in, the other to see company.—I have more—

over cellars round the court, and all other offices--- Of the same landlord I have bargained to have the use of a country-house which he has two miles out of town, so that myself and all my family have nothing more to do than to take our hats and remove from the one to the other---My landlord is moreover to keep the gardens in order---and what do you think I am to pay for all this? neither more or less than thirty pounds a year---all things are cheap in proportion---so we shall live for very very little.---I dined yesterday with Mr. Hewitt he is most pleasantly situated, and they are all well.---As for the books you have received for D---, the bookseller was a fool not to send the bill along with them--- I will write to him about it.--- I wish you was with me for two months; it would cure you of all evils ghostly and bodily---but this, like many other wishes both for you and myself, must have its completion elsewhere--- Adieu my kind friend, and believe that I love you as much from inclination as reason, for

I am most truly yours,

L. S T E R N E .

My wife and girl join in compliments to you---my best respects to my worthy Baron d'Holbach and all that society---remember me to my friend Mr. Panchaud.

## LETTER XXXI.

To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.

Toulouse, Oct. 19, 1762.

My dear Hall.

I RECEIVED your letter yesterday—so it has been travelling from Crazy Castle to Toulouse full eighteen days—If I had nothing to stop me I would engage to set out this morning, and knock at Crazy Castle gates in three days less time --- by which time I should find you and the colonel, Panty, &c. all alone --- the season I most wish and like to be with you——I rejoice from my heart, down to my reins, that you have snatch'd so many happy and sunshiny days out of the hands of the blue devils --- If we live to meet and join our forces as heretofore we will give these gentry a drubbing --- and turn them for ever out of their usurped citadel --- some legions of them have been put to flight already by your operations this last campaign --- and I hope to have a hand in dispersing the remainder the first time my dear cousin sets up his banners again under the square tower——But what art thou meditating with axes and hammers?——“*I know thy pride and the naughtiness of thy heart,*” and thou lovest the sweet visions of architraves, friezes and pediments with their tympanums, and thou hast found out a pretence, *à raison de cinq cent livres Sterling* to be laid out in four years, &c. &c. (so as not to be felt, which is always added by the devil as a bait) to justify thyself unto thyself——It may



be very wise to do this - - - but 'tis wiser to keep one's money in one's pocket, whilst there are wars without and rumours of wars within.—St.—advises his disciples to sell both coat and waistcoat---and go rather without shirt or sword, than leave no money in their scrip, to go to Jerusalem with——Now those *quatre ans consecutifs*, my dear Anthony, are the most precious morsels of thy *life to come* (in this world) and thou wilt do well to enjoy that morsel without cares, calculations, and curses, and damns, and debts—for as sure as stone is stone, and mortar is mortar, &c. 'twill be one of the many works of thy repentance—But after all, if the Fates have decreed it, as you and I have some time supposed it on account of your generosity, "*that you are never to be a monied man*," the decree will be fulfilled whether you adorn your castle and line it with cedar, and paint it within side and without side with vermilion, or not—*et cela etant* (having a bottle of Frontinac and glass at my right hand) I drink, dear Anthony, to thy health and happiness, and to the final accomplishments of all thy lunary and sublunary projects. - - - For six weeks together, after I wrote my last letter to you, my projects were many stories higher, for I was all that time, as I thought, journeying on to the other world——I fell ill of an epidemic vile fever which killed hundreds about me—The physicians here are the errantest charlatans in Europe, or the most ignorant of all pretending fools—I withdrew what was left of me out of their hands, and recommended my affairs entirely to Dame Nature—She (dear goddess) has saved me in fifty different pinching bouts, and I begin to have a kind of enthusiasm now in her favour, and in my own, that one or two more escapes will make me believe I shall leave you all at last by translation, and not by fair death. I am



now stout and foolish again as a happy man can wish to be—and am busy playing the fool with my uncle Toby, who I have got soused over head and ears in love.—I have many hints and projects for other works; all will go on I trust as I wish in this manner.—When I have reaped the benefit of this winter at Toulouse—I cannot see I have any thing more to do with it; therefore after having gone with my wife and girl to Bagnieres, I shall return from whence I came—Now my wife wants to stay another year to save money, and this opposition of wishes, tho' it will not be as sour as lemon, yet 'twill not be as sweet as sugar candy.—I wish Tollot would lead Sir Charles to Toulouse; 'tis as good as any town in the South of France—for my own part, 'tis not to my taste—but I believe, the ground work of my *ennui* is more to the eternal platitude of the French characters—little variety, no originality in it at all—than to any other cause—for they are very civil—but civility itself, in that uniform, wearies and boddens one to death—If I do not mind, I shall grow most stupid and sententious—Miss Shandy is hard at it with musick, dancing, and French speaking, in the last of which she does *à merveille*, and speaks it with an excellent accent, considering she practises within sight of the Pyrenean Mountains.—If the snows will suffer me, I propose to spend two or three months at Barege, or Bagnieres, but my dear wife is against all schemes of additional expences—which wicked propensity (tho' not of despotick power) yet I cannot suffer—tho' by the bye laudable enough—But she may talk—I will do my own way, and she will acquiesce without a word of debate on the subject.—Who can say so much in praise of his wife? Few I trow.—Mackarty is out of town vintaging—so write to me, *Monsieur Sterne gentilhomme*

*Anglois*--- 'twill find me.--- We are as much out of the road of all intelligence here as at the Cape of Good Hope --- so write a long nonsensical letter like this, now and then to me --- in which say nothing but what may be shewn, (tho' I love every paragraph and spirited stroke of your pen, others might not) for you must know a letter no sooner arrives from England, but curiosity is upon her knees to know the contents.—Adieu dear Hall, believe me,

Your affectionate,

L. STERNE.

We have had bitter cold weather here these fourteen days --- which has obliged us to sit with whole pagells of wood lighted up to our noses——'tis a dear article—but every thing else being extreme cheap, Madame keeps an excellent good house, with *soupe, boulli, roti*—&c. &c. for two hundred and fifty pounds a year.

## LETTER XXXII.

To Mr. Foley at Paris.

Toulouse, November 9, 1762.

My dear Foley,

I HAVE had this week your letter on my table, and hope you will forgive me not answering it sooner—and even to day I can but write you ten lines, being engaged at Mrs.<sup>1</sup> M——'s. I would not omit one post more

<sup>1</sup>Probably, Meadows.

acknowledging the favour—In a few posts I will write you a long one gratis, that is for love—Thank you for having done what I desired, you—and for the future direct to me under cover at Monsieur Brousse's—I receive all letters through him, more punctual and sooner than when left at the post-house——

Hewitt's family greet you with mine—we are much together and never forget you—forget me not to the Baron—and all the circle—nor to your domestic circle—

I am got pretty well, and sport much with my uncle Toby in the volume I am now fabricating for the laughing part of the world—for the melancholy part of it, I have nothing but my prayers—so God help them.—I shall hear from you in a post or two at least after you receive this—in the mean time dear Foley adieu, and believe no man wishes or esteems you more than your

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XXXIII.

To the same.

Toulouse, Dec. 17, 1762.

My dear Foley,

**T**HE post after I wrote last—I received yours with the inclosed draught upon the receiver, for which I return you all thanks—I have received this day likewise the box and tea all safe and sound—so we shall all of us be in our cups this Christmas, and drink without fear or

stint --- We begin to live extremely happy, and are all together every night—fiddling, laughing and singing, and cracking jokes. You will scarce believe the news I tell you—There are a company of English strollers arrived here, who are to act comedies all the Christmas, and are now busy in making dresses and preparing some of our best comedies—Your wonder will cease, when I inform you these strollers are your friends with the rest of our society, to whom I proposed this scheme *soulagement*—and I assure you we do well.—The next week, with a grand orchestra—we play the Busy Body—and the Journey to London the week after, but I have some thoughts of adapting it to our situation—and making it the Journey to Toulouse, which, with the change of half a dozen scenes, may be easily done.—Thus my dear Foley for want of something better we have recourse to ourselves, and strike out the best amusements we can from such materials.—My kind love and friendship to all my true friends—My service to the rest. Hewitt's family have just left me, having been this last week with us—they will be with me all the holidays.—In summer we shall visit them, and so balance hospitalities.

Adieu,

Yours most truly,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XXXIV.

To the same.

Toulouse, Wednesday, Dec. 3, 1762.

Dear Foley,

I HAVE for this last fortnight every post-day gone to Messrs. Brousse and Sons, in expectation of the pleasure of a letter from you, with the remittance I desired you to send me here.—When a man has no more than half a dozen guineas in his pocket—and a thousand miles from home—and in a country, where he can as soon raise the devil, as a six livres piece to go to market with, in case he has changed his last guinea—you will not envy my situation.—God bless you—remit me the balance due upon the receipt of this.—We are all at Hewitt's, practising a play we are to act here this Christmas holidays—all the *Dramatis Personæ* are of the English, of which we have a happy society living together like brothers and sisters—Your banker here has just sent me word the tea Mr. Hewitt wrote for is to be delivered into my hands—'tis all one into whose hands the treasure falls—we shall pay Brousse for it the day we get it—We join in our most friendly respects, and believe me, dear Foley, truly yours,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XXXV.

To the same.

Toulouse, March 29, 1763.

Dear Foley,

—**T**H O' that's a mistake! I mean the date of the place, for I write at Mr. Hewitt's in the country, and have been there with my people all the week—"How does Tristram do?" you say in yours to him—faith but so-so—the worst of human maladies is poverty—though that is a second lye--- for poverty of spirit is worse than poverty of purse, by ten thousand per cent.—I inclose you a remedy for the one, a draught of a hundred and thirty pounds, for which I insiſt upon a rescription by the very return—or I will send you and all your commissaries to the devil.—I do not hear they have tasted of one fleshy banquet all this Lent—you will make an excellent *grillé*,—<sup>1</sup> P——they can make nothing of him, but *bouillon*—I mean my other two friends no ill—so shall send them a reprieve, as they acted out of necessity—not choice—My kind respects to Baron D' Holbach and all his household—Say all that's kind for me to my other friends—you know how much, dear Foley, I am yours,

L. STERNE.

I have not five Louis to vapour with in this land of coxcombs—My wife's compliments.

<sup>1</sup> Probably, Panchaud.

## LETTER XXXVI.

To the same.

Toulouse, April 18, 1763.

Dear Foley,

I THANK you for your punctuality in sending me the rescription, and for your box by the courier, which came safe by last post.—I was not surprised much with your account of Lord \*\*\*\*\* being obliged to give way—and for the rest, all follows in course.—I suppose you will endeavour to fish and catch something for yourself in these troubled waters—at least I wish you all a reasonable man can wish for himself—which is wishing enough for you—all the rest is in the brain.—Mr. Woodhouse (who you know) is also here—he is a most amiable worthy man, and I have the pleasure of having him much with me—in a short time he proceeds to Italy.—The first week in June I decamp like a patriarch with my whole houshold, to pitch our tents for three months at the foot of the Pyrenean Hills at Bagnieres, where I expect much health and much amusement from the concourse of adventurers from all corners of the earth.—Mrs. Meadows sets out at the same time, for another part of the Pyrenean Hills, at Coutray—from whence to Italy—This is the general plan of operation here—except that I have some thoughts of spending the winter at Florence, and crossing over with my family to Leghorn by water—and in April of returning by way of Paris



home—but this is a sketch only, for in all things I am governed by circumstances—so that what is fit to be done on Monday, may be very unwise on Saturday—On all days of the week, believe me yours,

With unfeigned truth,

L. STERNE.

*P. S.* All compliments to my Parisian friends.

LETTER XXXVII.

To the same.

Toulouse, April 29, 1763.

My dear Foley,

**L**A S T post my agent wrote me word he would send up from York a bill for fourscore guineas, with orders to be paid into Mr. Selwin's hands for me. This he said he would expedite immediately, so 'tis possible you may have had advice of it—and 'tis possible also the money may not be paid this fortnight; therefore as I set out for Bagnieres in that time, be so good as to give me credit for the money for a few posts or so, and send me either a rescription for the money, or a draught for it—at the receipt of which, we shall decamp for ten or twelve weeks—You will receive twenty pounds more on my account, which send also—So much for that—as for pleasure—

you have it all amongst you at Paris—we have nothing here which deserves the name.—I shall scarce be tempted to sojourn another winter at Toulouse—for I cannot say it suits my health, as I hoped—'tis too moist—and I cannot keep clear of agues here—so that if I stay the next winter on this side of the water—'twill be either at Nice or Florence—and I shall return to England in April—Wherever I am, believe me, dear Foley, that I am,

Yours faithfully,

L. STERNE.

Madame and Mademoiselle present their best compliments—Remember me to all I regard, particularly Messrs. Panchaud, and the rest of your *houshold*.

## LETTER XXXVIII.

To the same.

Toulouse, May 21, 1763.

Dear Sir,

I TOOK the liberty, three weeks ago, to desire you would be so kind as to send me fourscore pounds, having received a letter the same post from my agent, that he would order the money to be paid to your correspondent in London in a fortnight.—It is some disappointment to me that you have taken no notice of my letter, especially as I told you we waited for the money before we

set out for Bagnieres,—and so little distrust had I that such a civility would be refused me, that we have actually had all our things pack'd up these eight days, in hourly expectation of receiving a letter.—Perhaps my good friend has waited till he heard the money was paid in London—but you might have trusted to my honour—that all the cash in your iron box (and all the bankers in Europe put together) could not have tempted me to say the thing *that is not*.—I hope before this you will have received an account of the money being paid in London—But it would have been taken kindly, if you had wrote me word you would transmit me the money when you had received it, but no sooner; for Mr. Ray of Montpellier, tho, I know him not, yet knows enough of me to have given me credit for a fortnight for ten times the sum,

I am, dear Foley, your friend

and hearty well-wisher,

L. STERNE.

I saw the family of the Hewitts yesterday, and asked them if you was in the land of the living—They said yea—for they had just received a letter from you.—After all I heartily forgive you—for you have done me a signal service in mortifying me, and it is this, I am determined to grow rich upon it.

Adieu, and God send you wealth and happiness—All compliments to—Before April next I am obliged to revisit your metropolis in my way to England.

## LETTER XXXIX.

To the same.

Toulouse, June 9, 1763.

My dear Foley,

**I** This moment received yours --- consequently the moment I got it I sat down to answer it—So much for a logical inference.

Now believe me I had never wrote you so testy a letter, had I not both loved and esteemed you—and it was merely in vindication of the rights of friendship that I wrote in a way as if I was hurt—for neglect me in your heart, I knew you could not, without cause; which my heart told me I never had—or will ever give you:—I was the best friends with you that ever I was in my life, before my letter had got a league, and pleaded the true excuse for my friend, “That he was oppressed with a multitude of business.” Go on, my dear Foley and have but that excuse, (so much do I regard your interest) that I would be content to suffer a *real evil* without future murmuring—but in truth, my disappointment was partly chimerical at the bottom, having a letter of credit for two hundred pounds from a person I never saw, by me—but which, out of a nicety of temper, I would not make any use of—I set out in two days for Bagnieres, but direct to me to Brousse, who will forward all my letters.—Dear Foley adieu.—Believe me,

Yours affectionately,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XL.

To the same.

Toulouse, June 12, 1763.

Dear Foley,

**L**UCKILY just before I was stepping into my chaise for Bagnieres, has a strayed fifty pound bill found its way to me: so I have sent it to its lawful owner inclosed—My noodle of an agent, instead of getting Mr. Selwin to advise you he had received the money (which would have been enough) has got a bill for it, and sent it rambling to the furthest part of France after me; and if it had not caught me just now, it might have followed me into Spain, for I shall cross the Pyreneans, and spend a week in that kingdom, which is enough for a fertile brain to write a volume upon.—When I write the history of my travels—Memorandum! I am not to forget how honest a man I have for a banker at Paris.—But, my dear friend, when you say you dare trust me for what little occasions I may have, you have as much faith as honesty—and more of both than of good policy.—I thank you however ten thousand times—and except such liberty as I have lately taken with you—and that too at a pinch—I say beyond that I will not trespass upon your good nature, or friendliness to serve me.—God bless you, dear Foley,

I am yours whilst,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XLI.

To the same.

Montpellier, Oct. 5, 1763.

Dear Foley,

**I** Am ashamed I have not taken an opportunity of thanking you before now, for your friendly act of civility, in ordering Brousse, your correspondent at Toulouse, in case I should have occasion, to pay me fifteen hundred livres—which as I knew the offer came from your heart, I made no difficulty of accepting.—In my way thro' Toulouse to Marseilles, where we have been, but neither liking the place nor Aix (particularly the latter, it being a parliament town, of which Toulouse has given me a surfeit) we have returned here, where we shall reside the winter—My wife and daughter purpose to stay a year at least behind me—and when winter is over, to return to Toulouse, or go to Montaubon, where they will stay till they return, or I fetch them—For myself I shall set out in February for England, where my heart has been fled these six months—but I shall stay a fortnight with my friends at Paris ; tho' I verily believe, if it was not for the pleasure of seeing and chattering with you, I should pass on directly to Brussels, and so on to Rotterdam, for the sake of seeing Holland, and embark from thence to London—But I must stay a little with those I love and have so many reasons to regard—you cannot place too much of this to your own score.—I have had an

offer of going to Italy a fortnight ago—but I must like my subject as well as the terms, neither of which were to my mind.—Pray what English have you at Paris? where is my young friend Mr. Fox? We hear of three or four English families coming to us here—If I can be serviceable to any you would serve, you have but to write.—Mr. H . . . has sent my friend W—'s picture—You have seen the original, or I would have sent it you—I believe I shall beg leave to get a copy of my own from yours, when I come in *propria persona*—till when, God bless you, my dear friend, and believe me,

Most faithfully yours,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XLII.

To the same.

Montpellier, Jan. 5, 1764.

My dear Friend,

YOU see I cannot pass over the fifth of the month without thinking of you, and writing to you—The last is a periodical habit—the first is from my heart, and I do it oftner than I remember—however, from both motives together I maintain I have a right to the pleasure of a single line—be it only to tell me how your watch goes—You know how much happier it would make me to



know that all things belonging to you went on well.—You are going to have them all to yourself (I hear) and that Mr. S—— is true to his first intention of leaving business—I hope this will enable you to accomplish yours in a shorter time, that you may get to your long wished-for retreat of tranquillity and silence—When you have got to your fireside, and into your arm-chair (and by the by, have another to spare for a friend) and are so much a sovereign as to sit in your furr'd cap (if you like it, tho' I should not, for a man's ideas are at least the cleaner for being dress'd decently) why then it will be a miracle if I do not glide in like a ghost upon you—and in a very unghost-like fashion help you off with a bottle of your best wine.

January 15.—It does not happen every day that a letter begun in the most perfect health, should be concluded in the greatest weakness—I wish the vulgar high and low do not say it was a judgement upon me for taking all this liberty with *ghosts*—Be it as it may—I took a ride, when the first part of this was wrote, towards Perenas—and returned home in a shivering fit, tho' I ought to have been in a fever, for I had tried my beast; and he was as unmoveable as Don Quixote's wooden horse, and my arm was half dislocated in whipping him—This, quoth I, is inhuman—No, says a peasant on foot behind me, I'll drive him home—so he laid on his posteriors, but 'twas needless—as his face was turn'd towards Montpellier, he began to trot.—But to return, this fever was confined me ten days in my bed—I have suffered in this scuffle with death terribly—but unless the spirit of prophecy deceive me—I shall not die but live—in the mean time Foley dear let us live as merrily but *as innocently* as we can—It has

ever been as good, if not better, than a bishoprick to me—and *I desire no other*—Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me yours,

L. S.

Please to give inclosed to Mr. <sup>1</sup>T.—and tell him I thank him cordially from my heart for his great *goodwill*.

LETTER XLIII.

To the same.

Montpellier, Jan. 20, 1764.

My dear Friend,

**H**EARING by Lord Rochford (who in passing thro' here in his way to Madrid has given me a call) that my worthy friend Mr. Fox was now in Paris—I have inclosed a letter to him, which you will present in course, or direct to him.—I suppose you are full of English—but in short we are here as if in another world, where unless some stray'd soul arrives, we know nothing of what is going on in yours.—Lord Grosvenor I suppose is gone from Paris, or I had wrote also to him. I know you are as busy as a bee, and have few moments to yourself—nevertheless bestow one of them upon an old friend, and write me a line—and if Mr. Fox is too idle and has ought to say to me, pray write a second line for him.—We had a letter from Miss P——— this week, who it seems has decamp'd for ever from Paris—*All is for the best*—which

<sup>1</sup>Probably, Tollot.

is my general reflection upon many things in this world.—Well! I shall shortly come and shake you by the hand in St. Sauveur—if still you are there.—My wife returns to Toulouse, and purposes to spend the summer at Bagnieres—I on the contrary go and visit my wife, the church in Yorkshire.—We all live the longer—at least the happier—for having things our own way.—This is my conjugal maxim—I own 'tis not the best of maxims—but I maintain 'tis not the worst. Adieu dear Foley and believe me,

Yours with truth,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XLIV.

To Mrs. Ferguson.

Montpellier, Feb. 1, 1764.

**I** AM preparing, my dear Mrs. Ferguson to leave France, for I am heartily tired of it—That insipidity there is in French characters has disgusted your friend Yorick.—I have been dangerously ill, and cannot think that the sharp air of Montpellier has been of service to me—and so my physicians told me when they had me under their hands for about a month—if you stay any longer here, Sir, it will be fatal to you—And why, good people, were you not kind enough to tell me this sooner?—After having discharged them, I told Mrs. Sterne that I should

set out for England very soon; but as she chuses to remain in France for two or three years, I have no objection, except that I wish my girl in England.—The states of Languedoc are met—'tis a fine raree-shew, with the usual accompaniments of fiddles, bears, and puppet-shews.—I believe I shall step into my post-chaise with more alacrity to fly from these sights, than a Frenchman would to fly to them—and except a tear at parting with my little slut, I shall be in high spirits; and every step I take that brings me nearer England, will I think help to set this poor frame to rights. Now pray write to me, directed to Mr. Foley at Paris, and tell me what I am to bring you over.—How do I long to greet all my friends! few do I value more than yourself.—My wife chuses to go to Montauban, rather than stay here, in which I am truly passive.—If this should not find you at Bath, I hope it will be forwarded to you, as I wish to fulfill your commissions - - - and so adieu—Accept every warm wish for your health, and believe me ever yours,

L. S T E R N E .

*P. S.* My physicians have almost poisoned me with what they call *bouillons refraichissants*—'tis a cock flead alive and boiled with poppy seeds, then pounded in a mortar, afterwards pass'd thro' a sieve—There is to be one crawfish in it, and I was gravely told it must be a male one—a female would do me more hurt than good.

## LETTER XLV.

To Miss Sterne.

Paris, May 15, 1746.

My dear Lydia,

**B**Y this time I suppose your mother and self are fixed at Montauban, and I therefore direct to your banker, to be delivered to you.—I acquiesced in your staying in France—likewise it was your mother's wish—-but I must tell you both (that unless your health had not been a plea made use of) I should have wished you both to return with me.—I have sent you the Spectators, and other books, particularly Metastasio; but I beg my girl to read the former, and only make the latter her amusement.—I hope you have not forgot my last request, to make no friendships with the French-women—not that I think ill of them all, but sometimes women of the best principles are the most *insinuating*—nay I am so jealous of you, that I should be miserable were I to see you had the least grain of coquetry in your composition.—You have enough to do—for I have also sent you a guittar—and as you have no genius for drawing, (tho' you never could be made to believe it) pray waste not your time about it—Remember to write to me as to a friend—in short, whatever comes into your little head, and then it will be natural.—If your mother's rheumatism continues, and she chooses to go to Bagnieres—tell her not to be stopped for want of money, for my purse shall be as open as my

heart. I have preached at the ambassador's chapel—Hezekiah—(an odd subject your mother will say) There was a concourse of all nations, and religions too.—I shall leave Paris in a few days—I am lodged in the same hotel with Mr. Tollot they are good and generous souls—Tell your mother that I hope she will write to me, and that when she does so, I may also receive a letter from my Lydia.

Kiss your mother from me, and believe me,

Your affectionate,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XLVI.

To Mr. Foley.

York, August 6, 1764.

My dear Foley,

**T**HERE is a young lady with whom I have sent a letter to you, who will arrive at Paris in her way to Italy—her name is Miss Tuting; a lady known and loved by the whole kingdom—if you can be of any aid to her in your advice, &c. as to her journey, &c. your good nature and politeness, I am sure need no spur from me to do it. I was sorry we were like the two buckets of a well, whilst in London, for we were never able to be both resi-

dent together the month I continued in and about the environs.—If I get a cough this winter which holds me three days, you will certainly see me at Paris the week following, for now I abandon every thing in this world to health and to my friends—for the last sermon that I shall ever preach, was preach'd at Paris—so I am altogether an idle man, or rather a free one, which is better. I sent, last post, twenty pounds to Mrs. Sterne which makes a hundred pounds remitted, since I got here—You must pay yourself what I owe you out of it—and place the rest to account.—Betwixt this and Lady-day next, Mrs. Sterne will draw from time to time upon you to about the amount of a hundred louis—but not more—(I think) I having left her a hundred in her pocket.—But you shall always have money beforehand of mine—and she purposes to spend no further than five thousand livres in the year—but twenty pound, this way or that, makes no difference between us——Give my kindest compliments to Mr. Panchaud I have a thousand things to say to you, and would go half way to Paris to tell them you in your ear.—The Messrs. Tollot, Hewitt, &c. and many more of your friends with whom I am now, send their services—Mine to all friends—Yours, dear Foley most truly.

L. STERNE.



## LETTER XLVII.

To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.

September 4, 1764.

NOW, my dear, dear Anthony—I do not think a week or ten days playing the good fellow (at this very time) at Scarborough so abominable a thing—but if a man could get there cleverly, and every soul in his house in the mind to try what could be done in furtherance thereof, I have no one to consult in this affair—therefore as a man may do worse things, the English of all which is this, that I am going to leave a few poor sheep here in the wilderness for fourteen days—and from pride and naughtiness of heart to go see what is doing at Scarborough—stedfastly meaning afterwards to lead a new life and strengthen my faith.—Now some folks say there is much company there—and some say not—and I believe there is neither the one or the other—but will be both, if the world will have but a month's patience or so.—No, my dear Hall I did not delay sending your letter directly to the post—As there are critical times, or rather turns and revolutions in \*\*\* humours, I knew not what the delay of an hour might hazard—I will answer for him, he has seventy times seven forgiven you—and as often wish'd you at the devil.—After many oscillations the pendulum will rest firm as ever.—

I send all kind compliments to Sir Chas. Danvers and G—s—I love them from my soul—If Gilbert is with you, him also.—I go on, not rapidly, but well enough

with my uncle Toby's amours—There is no sitting, and cudgelling ones brains whilst the sun shines bright—'twill be all over in six or seven weeks, and there are dismal months enow after to endure suffocation by a brimstone fire-side.—If you can get to Scarborough, do.—A man who makes six tons of alum a week, may do any thing—Lord Granby is to be there—what a temptation!

Yours affectionately,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XLVIII.

To Mr. Foley at Paris.

York, September 29, 1764.

My dear Friend,

I Have just had the honour of a letter from Miss Tutting, full of the acknowledgments of your attention and kind services to her; I will not believe these arose from the Duke of A . . . 's letters, nor mine. Surely *she needed no recommendation*—the truest and most honest compliment I can pay you, is to say they came from your own good heart, only you was introduced to the object—for the rest follow'd in course—However let me cast in my mite of thanks to the treasury which belongs to good natured actions. I have been with Lord Granby these three weeks at Scarborough—the pleasures of which I found somewhat more exalted than those of Bagnieres last year—I am now returned to my Philosophical Hut to finish Tristram, which I calculate will be ready for the world

about Christmas, at which time I decamp from hence, and fix my head quarters at London for the winter—unless my cough pushes me forwards to your Metropolis—or that I can persuade some *gros* my Lord to take a trip to you—I'll try if I can make him relish the joys of the *Tuileries*, *Opera Comique*, &c.

I had this week a letter from Mrs. Sterne from Montauban, in which she tells me she has occasion for fifty pounds immediately—Will you send an order to your correspondent at Montauban to pay her so much cash—and I will in three weeks send as much to Becket—But as her purse is low, for God's sake write directly.—Now you must do something equally essential—to rectify a mistake in the mind of your correspondent there, who it seems gave her a hint not long ago, "*that she was separated from me for life.*"—Now as this is not true in the first place, and may give a disadvantageous impression of her to those she lives amongst—'twould be unmerciful to let her, or my daughter, suffer by it; so do be so good as to undeceive him—for in a year or two she proposes (and indeed I expect it with impatience from her) to rejoin me—and tell them I have all the confidence in the world she will not spend more than I can afford, and I only mention'd two hundred guineas a year—because 'twas right to name some certain sum, for which I beg'd you to give her credit.—I write to you of all my most intimate concerns, as to a brother, so excuse me dear Foley. God bless you—Believe me,

Yours affectionately,

L. STERNE.

Compliments to Mr. Panchaud, D'Holbach, &c.

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## LETTER XLIX.

To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.

Coxwould, Thursday, [Sept. 1764].

My dear Cousin,

**I** Am but this moment return'd from Scarborough, where I have been drinking the waters ever since the races, and have received marvellous strength, had I not debilitated it as fast as I got it, by playing the good fellow with Lord Granby and Co. too much. I rejoice you have been encamp'd at Harrowgate, from which, by now, I suppose you are decamp'd—otherwise as idle a beast as I have been, I would have sacrificed a few days to the god of laughter with you and your jolly set.—I have done nothing good that I know of, since I left you, except paying off your guinea and a half to K——, in my way thro' York hither—I must try now and do better—Go on, and prosper for a month,

Your affectionate,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER L.

To Mr. Foley at Paris.

York, November 11, 1764.

My dear Friend,

I Sent ten days ago, a bank bill of thirty pounds to Mr. Becket, and this post one of sixty—When I get to London, which will be in five weeks, you will receive what shall always keep you in bank for Mrs. Sterne; in the mean time I have desired Becket to send you four-score pounds, and if my wife, before I get to London, should have occasion for fifty louis let her not wait a minute, and if I have not paid it, a week or a fortnight I know will break no squares with a good and worthy friend.—I will contrive to send you these two new volumes of Tristram, as soon as ever I get them from the press.—You will read as odd a tour thro' France as ever was projected or executed by traveller, or travel-writers, since the world began—'Tis a laughing good temper'd satyr against travelling (as *puppies* travel). Panchaud will enjoy it—I am quite civil to your Parisians—*et pour cause* you know—'tis likely I may see them in spring—Is it possible for you to get me over a copy of my picture any how? If so I would write to Mademoiselle N—— to make as good a copy from it as she possibly could—with a view to do her service here—and I would remit her the price—I really believe it would be the parent of a dozen portraits to her, if she executes it with the spirit of the original in your

hands——for it will be seen by many—and as my phiz is as remarkable as myself, if she preserves the true character of both, it will do her honour and service too.—Write me a line about this, and tell me you are well and happy—Will you present my kind respects to the worthy Baron—I shall send him one of the best impressions of my picture from Mr. Reynolds's—another to Monsieur Panchaud. My love to Mr. Selwin and Panchaud.

I am most truly yours,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER LI.

To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.

November 13, 1764.

My dear Cousin,

'TIS a church militant week with me, full of marches, and countermarches—and treaties about Stillington common, which we are going to inclose—otherwise I would have obey'd your summons—and yet I could not well have done it this week neither, having receiv'd a letter from C——, who has been very ill; and is coming down to stay a week or ten days with me.---Now I know he is ambitious of being better acquainted with you; and longs from his soul for a sight of you in your own castle. ---I cannot do otherwise, than bring him with me---nor

can I gallop away and leave him an empty house to pay a visit to from London, as he comes half express to see me. --I thank you for the care of my northern vintage--I fear after all I must give it a fermentation on the other side of the Alps, which is better than being on the lees with it--but *nous verrons*--yet I fear as it has got such hold of my brain, and comes upon it like an armed man at nights--I must give way for quietness sake, or be haggard with the conceit of it all my life long.—I have been *Miss-ridden* this last week by a couple of romping girls (*bien mises et comme il faut*) who might as well have been in the house with me, (tho' perhaps not, my retreat here is too quiet for them) but they have taken up all my time, and have given my judgment and fancy more airings than they wanted.—These things accord not well with sermon making—but 'tis my vile errantry, as Sancho says, and that is all that can be made of it.—I trust all goes swimmingly on with your alum; that the works amuse you, and call you twice out (at least) a day.—I shall see them I trust in ten days, or thereabout—If it was any way possible, I would set out this moment, tho' I have no cavalry—(*except a she ass*) Give all friendly respects to Mrs. C. and to Col. Hall's and the garrison, both of Guisbro and Skelton.—I am, dear Anthony, affectionately

Yours,

L. STERNE.



## LETTER LII.

To Mr. Foley at Paris.

York, November 16, 1764.

My dear Friend,

**T**HREE posts before I had the favour of yours (which is come to hand this moment) I had wrote to set Mrs. Sterne right in her mistake—That you had any money of mine in your hands—being very sensible that the hundred pounds I had sent you, thro' Becket's hands, was but about what would balance with you—The reason of her error was owing to my writing her word, I would send you a bill in a post or two for fifty pounds—which, my finances falling short just then, I deferr'd—so that I had paid nothing to any one—but was, however, come to York this day, and I have sent you a draught for a hundred pounds—in honest truth, a fortnight ago I had not the cash—but I am as honest as the king (as Sancho Pança says) *only not so rich*.

Therefore if Mrs. Sterne should want thirty louis more, let her have them—and I will balance all (which will not be much) with honour at Christmas, when I shall be in London, having now just finish'd my two volumes of Tristram.—I have some thoughts of going to Italy this year—at least I shall not defer it above another.—I have been with Lord Granby, and with Lord Shelburn, but am now sat down till December in my sweet retire-

ment—I wish you was sat down as happily, and as free of all worldly cares.—In a few years, my dear Foley, I hope to see you a real country gentleman, tho' not altogether exiled from your friends in London—there I shall spend every winter of my life, in the same lap of contentment, where I enjoy myself now—and wherever I go—we must bring three parts in four of the treat along with us.—In short we must be happy within—and then few things without us make much difference.—This is my Shandean philosophy.—You will read a comic account of my journey from Calais thro' Paris to the Garonne, in these volumes—my friends tell me they are done with spirit—it must speak for itself.—Give my kind respects to Mr. Selwin and my friend Panchaud—When you see Baron d'Holbach, present him my respects, and believe me, dear Foley.

Yours cordially,

L. STERNE.

### LETTER LIII.

To David Garrick, Esq.

London, March 16, 1765.

Dear Garrick,

**I** Threatened you with a letter in one I wrote a few weeks ago to Foley, but (to my shame be it spoken) I lead such a life of dissipation I have never had a moment to myself which has not been broke in upon, by one engagement or impertinence or another—and as

plots thicken towards the latter end of a piece, I find, unless I take pen and ink just now, I shall not be able to do it, till either I am got into the country, or you to the city. You are teized and tormented too much by your correspondents, to return to us, and with accounts how much your friends, and how much your Theatre wants you—so that I will not magnify either our loss or yours—but hope cordially to see you soon.—Since I wrote last I have frequently stept into your house—that is, as frequently as I could take the whole party, where I dined, along with me—This was but justice to you, as I walk'd in as a wit—but with regard to myself, I balanced the account thus—I am sometimes in my friend ——'s house, but he is always in Tristram Shandy's—where my friends say he will continue (and I hope the prophecy true for my own immortality) even when he himself is no more.

I have had a lucrative winter's campaign here—Shandy sells well—I am taxing the publick with two more volumes of sermons, which will more than double the gains of Shandy—It goes into the world with a prancing list of *de toute la noblesse*—which will bring me in three hundred pounds, exclusive of the sale of the copy—so that with all the contempt of money which *ma façon de penser* has ever impress'd on me, I shall be rich in spite of myself: but I scorn you must know, in the high *ton* I take at present, to pocket all this trash—I set out to lay a portion of it in the service of the world, in a tour round Italy, where I shall spring game, or the duce is in the dice.—In the beginning of September I quit England, that I may avail myself of the time of vintage, when all nature is joyous, and so saunter philosophically for a

year or so, on the other side the Alps.—I hope your pilgrimages have brought Mrs. Garrick and yourself back *à la fleur de jeunesse*—May you both long feel the sweets of it, and your friends with you.—Do, dear friend, make my kindest wishes and compliments acceptable to the best and wisest of the daughters of Eve—You shall ever believe, and ever find me affectionately yours.

L. STERNE.

## LETTER LIV.

To the same.

Bath, April 6, 1765.

**I** Scalp you!—my dear Garrick! my dear friend!—foul befall the man who hurts a hair of your head!—and so full was I of that very sentiment, that my letter had not been put into the post-office ten minutes, before my heart smote me; and I sent to recall it—but failed—You are sadly to blame, Shandy! for this, quoth I, leaning with my head on my hand, as I recriminated upon my false delicacy in the affair—Garrick's nerves (if he has any left) are as fine and delicately spun, as thy own—his sentiments as honest and friendly—thou knowest, Shandy, that he loves thee—why wilt thou hazard him a moment's pain? Puppy! fool, coxcomb, jack-ass, &c. &c.—and so I balanced the account to your favour, before I received it drawn up in *your way*—I say *your way*—for it is not stated so much to your honour and credit, as I had passed the account before—for it was a most lamented truth, that I never received one of the letters

your friendship meant me, except whilst in Paris.—O! how I congratulate you for the anxiety the world has, and continues to be under, for your return.—Return, return to the few who love you, and the thousands who admire you.—The moment you set your foot upon your stage—mark! I tell it you—by some magic, irresistible power, every fibre about your heart will vibrate afresh, and as strong and feelingly as ever—Nature, with glory at her back, will light up the torch within you—and there is enough of it left, to heat and enlighten the world these many, many, many years.

Heaven be praised! (I utter it from my soul) that your lady, and my Minerva, is in a condition to walk to Windsor—full rapturously will I lead the graceful pilgrim to the temple, where I will sacrifice with the purest incense to her—but you may worship with me, or not—'twill make no difference either in the truth or warmth of my devotion—still (after all I have seen) I still maintain her peerless.

Powel! good Heav'n!—give me some one with less smoke and more fire—There are who, like the Pharisees, still think they shall be heard for *much* speaking—Come—come away my dear Garrick and teach us another lesson.

Adieu!—I love you dearly—and your lady better—not hobbihorsically—but most sentimentally and affectionately—for I am yours (that is if you never say another word about ——) with all the sentiments of love and friendship you deserve from me,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER LV.

To Mr. Foley.

Bath, April 15, 1765

My dear Foley.

**M**Y wife tells me she has drawn for one hundred pounds, and 'tis fit that you should be paid it that minute—the money is now in Becket's hands—send me, my dear Foley, my account, that I may discharge the balance to this time, and know what to leave in your hands.—I have made a good campaign of it this year in the field of the literati—my two volumes of *Tristram*, and two of sermons, which I shall print very soon, will bring me a considerable sum.—Almost all the nobility in England honour me with their names, and 'tis thought it will be the largest, and most splendid list which ever pranced before a book, since subscriptions came into fashion.—Pray present my most sincere compliments to lady H—whose name I hope to insert with many others.—As so many men of genius favour me with their names also, I will quarrel with Mr. Hume, and call him deist, and what not, unless I have his name too.—My love to Lord W——. Your name, Foley I have put in as a free-will offering of my labours—your list of subscribers you will send—'tis but a crown for sixteen sermons—Dog cheap! but I am in quest of honour, not money.—Adieu, adieu, —believe me, dear Foley.

Yours truly,

L. STERNE.



## LETTER LVI.

To Mr. Woodhouse.

Coxwold, May 23, 1765.

AT this moment am I sitting in my summer house with my head and heart full, not of my uncle Toby's amours with the widow Wadman, but my sermons—and your letter has drawn me out of a pensive mood—the spirit of it *pleaseth me*—but in this solitude, what can I tell or write to you but about myself—I am glad that you are in love—'twill cure you (at least) of the spleen, which has a bad effect on both man and woman—I myself must ever have some Dulcinea in my head—it harmonises the soul—and in those cases I first endeavour to make the lady believe so, or rather I begin first to make myself believe that I am in love—but I carry on my affairs quite in the French way, sentimentally—“*l'amour*” (say they) “*n'est rien sans sentiment*”—Now notwithstanding they make such a pother about the *word*, they have no precise idea annex'd to it—And so much for that same subject called love—I must tell you how I have just treated a French gentleman of fortune in France, who took a liking to my daughter—Without any ceremony (having got my direction from my wife's banker) he wrote me word that he was in love with my daughter, and desired to know what *fortune* I would give her at present, and how much at my *death*—by the bye, I think there was very little *sentiment* on *his side*—My answer was “Sir, I shall give her ten thousand pounds the day of marriage—my calculation is as follows—she is not eighteen, you



are sixty-two—there goes five thousand pounds—then Sir, you at least think her not ugly—she has many accomplishments, speaks Italian, French, plays upon the guittar, and as I fear you play upon no instrument whatever, I think you will be happy to take her at my terms, for here finishes the account of the ten thousand pounds”—I do not suppose but he will take this as I mean, that is—a flat refusal.—I have had a parsonage house burnt down by the carelessness of my curate’s wife—as soon as I can I must rebuild it, I trow—but I lack the means at present—yet I am never happier than when I have not a shilling in my pocket—for when I have I can never call it my own. Adieu my dear friend—may you enjoy better health than me, tho’ not better spirits, for that is impossible.

Yours sincerely,

L. STERNE.

My compliments to the Col.

## LETTER LVII.

To Mr. Foley at Paris.

York, July 13, 1765.

My dear Sir,

**I** Wrote some time in spring, to beg you would favour me with my account. I believe you was set out from Paris, and that Mr. Garrick brought the letter with him—which possibly he gave you. In the hurry of your

business you might forget the contents of it; and in the hurry of mine in town (though I called once) I could not get to see you. I decamp for Italy in September, and shall see your face at Paris, you may be sure—but I shall see it with more pleasure when I am out of debt—which is your own fault, for Becket has had money left in his hands for that purpose.—Do send Mrs. Sterne her two last volumes of *Tristram*; they arrived with your's in spring, and she complains she has not got them.—My best services to Mr. Panchaud.—I am busy composing two volumes of sermons—they will be printed in September, though I fear not time enough to bring them with me. Your name is amongst the list of a few of my honorary subscribers—who subscribe for love.—If you see Baron D'Holbach, and Diderot, present my respects to them—If the Baron wants any English books, he will let me know, and I will bring them with me.—Adieu.

I am truly your's,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER LVIII.

To Mrs. Meadows.

Coxwold, July 21, 1765.

**T**HE first time I have dipped my pen into the ink-horn for this week past is to write to you, and to thank you most sincerely for your kind epistle—Will this be a sufficient apology for my letting it be ten days

upon my table without answering it—I trust it will—I am sure my own feelings tell me so, because I felt it impossible to do any thing that is ungracious towards you.—It is not every hour, or day, or week of a man’s life that is a fit season for the duties of friendship—sentiment is not always at hand—pride and folly, and what is called business, oftentimes keep it at a distance—and without sentiment, what is friendship?—a name, a shadow!—But, to prevent a misapplication of this, (though why should I fear it from so kind and gentle a spirit as your’s) —you must know, that by carelessness of my curate, or his wife, or his maid, or some one within his gates, the parsonage-house at Sutton was burnt to the ground, with the furniture that belonged to me, and a pretty good collection of books; the loss three hundred and fifty pounds —The poor man with his wife took the wings of the next morning, and fled away—this has given me real vexation, for so much was my pity and esteem for him, that as soon as I heard of this disaster, I sent to desire he would come and take up his abode with me till another habitation was ready to receive him—but he was gone—and, as I am told, through fear of my persecution.—Heavens! how little did he know of me to suppose I was among the number of those wretches that heap misfortune upon misfortune—and when the load is almost insupportable, still to add to the weight! God, who reads my heart, knows it to be true—that I wish rather to share, than to encrease the burthen of the miserable—to dry up, instead of adding a single drop to the stream of sorrow.—As for the dirty trash of this world, I regard it not—the loss of it does not cost me a sigh, for after all, I may say with the Spanish Captain, that I am as good a gentleman as the king, only not quite so rich.

But to the point: Shall I expect you here this summer?—I much wish that you may make it convenient to gratify me in a visit for a few weeks—I will give you a roast fowl for your dinner, and a clean table-cloth every day—and tell you a story by way of desert—in the heat of the day we will sit in the shade—and in the evening the fairest of all the milk-maids who pass by my gate, shall weave a garland for you.—If I should not be so fortunate, contrive to meet me the beginning of October—I shall stay a fortnight after, and then seek a kindlier climate.—This plaguy cough of mine seems to gain ground, and will bring me to my grave in spite of me—but while I have strength to run away from it I will—I have been wrestling with it for these twenty years past—and what with laughter and good spirits, have prevented its giving me a fall—but my antagonist presses closer than ever upon me—and I have nothing left on my side but another journey abroad—A-propos—are you for a scheme of that sort? if not, perhaps you will accompany me as far as Dover, that we may laugh together on the beach, to put Neptune in a good humour before I embark——God bless you, my dear Madam,——and believe me ever your's,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER LIX.

To Mr. Woodhouse.

Coxwold, December 20, 1765.

**T**HANKS, my dear Woodhouse for your letter—I am just preparing to come and greet you and many other friends in town—I have drained my ink standish to the bottom, and after I have published, shall set my face, not towards Jerusalem, but towards the Alps—I find I must once more fly from death whilst I have strength—I shall go to Naples and see whether the air of that place will not set this poor frame to rights—As to the project of getting a bear to lead, I think I have enough to do to govern myself—and however profitable it might be (according to your opinion) I am sure it would be unpleasurable—Few are the minutes of life, and I do not think that I have any to throw away on any one being.—I shall spend nine or ten months in Italy, and call upon my wife and daughter in France at my return—so shall be back by the King's birth-day—what a project!—and now, my dear friend, am I going to York, not for the sake of society—nor to walk by the side of the muddy Ouse, but to recruit myself of the most violent spitting of blood that ever mortal man experienced; because I had rather (in case 'tis ordained so) die there, than in a post-chaise on the road.—If the amour of my uncle Toby do not please you, I am mistaken—and so with a droll story I will finish this letter—A sensible friend of mine, with whom not long ago, I spent some hours in conversation,

met an apothecary (an acquaintance of ours)—the latter asked him how he did? why, ill, very ill—I have been with Sterne, who has given me such a dose of *Attic salt* that I am in a fever—Attic salt, Sir, Attic salt! I have Glauber salt—I have Epsom salt in my shop, &c.—Oh! I suppose 'tis some French salt—I wonder you would trust his report of the medicine, he cares not what he takes himself—I fancy I see you smile—I long to be able to be in London, and embrace my friends there—and shall enjoy myself a week or ten days at Paris with my friends, particularly the Baron d'Holbach, and the rest of the joyous sett—As to the females—no I will not say a word about them—only I hate borrowed characters, taken up (as a woman does her shift) for the purpose she intends to effectuate. Adieu, adieu—I am yours whilst

L. STERNE.

## LETTER LX.

To Mr. Panchaud at Paris.

London, October 7, 1765.

Dear Sir,

**I**T is a terrible thing to be in Paris without a perriwig on a man's head! In seven days from the date of this, I should be in that case, unless you tell your neighbour Madame Requiere to get her *bon mari de me faire une peruque à bourse, au mieux—c'est à dire—une la plus extraordinaire—la plus jolie—la plus gentille—et la plus—*

*—Mais qu'importe? jai l'honneur d'etre grand critique*

—*et bien difficile encore dans les affaires de periques*—and in one word that he gets it done in five days after notice—

I beg pardon for this liberty, my dear friend, and for the trouble of forwarding this by the very next post.—If my friend Mr. Foley is in Paris—my kind love to him and respects to all others—in sad haste—

Yours truly,

L. STERNE.

I have paid into Mr. Becket's hands six hundred pounds, which you may draw upon at sight, according as either Mrs. Sterne or myself make it expedient.

## LETTER LXI.

To the same.

Beau Pont Voisin, November 7, 1765.

Dear Sir,

I forgot to desire you to forward whatever letters came to your hand to your banker at Rome, to wait for me against I get there, as it is uncertain how long I may stay at Turin, &c. &c. at present I am held prisoner in this town by the sudden swelling of two pitiful rivulets from the snows melting on the Alps—so that we cannot either advance to them, or retire back again to Lyons—for how long the gentlemen who are my fellow-travellers, and myself, shall languish in this state of vexatious captivity, heaven and earth surely know, for it rains as if they were coming together to settle the matter.—I



had an agreeable journey to Lyons, and a joyous time there; dining and supping every day at the commandant's—Lord F. W. I left there, and about a dozen English—If you see lord Ossory, lord William Gordon, and my friend Mr. Crawford, remember me to them—if Wilkes is at Paris yet, I send him all kind wishes—present my compliments as well as thanks to my good friend Miss Panchaud, and believe me, dear Sir, with all truth, yours,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER LXII.

To the same.

Turin, November 15, 1765.

Dear Sir,

**A**FTER many difficulties I have got here safe and sound—tho' eight days in passing the mountains of Savoy.—I am stopped here for ten days, by the whole country betwixt here and Milan being laid under water by continual rains—but I am very happy, and have found my way into a dozen houses already—Tomorrow I am to be presented to the King, and when that ceremony is over, I shall have my hands full of engagements.—No English here but Sir James Macdonald who meets with much respect, and Mr. Ogilby. We are all together, and shall depart in peace together—My kind services to all—pray forward the inclosed—

Yours most truly,

L. STERNE.

LETTER LXIII.

To the same.

Turin, November 28, 1765.

Dear Sir,

I AM just leaving this place with Sir James Macdonald for Milan, &c.—We have spent a joyous fortnight here, and met with all kinds of honours—and with regret do we both bid adieu—but health on my side—and good sense on his—say 'tis better to be at Rome—you say at Paris—but you put variety out of the question.—I intreat you to forward the inclosed to Mrs. Sterne—My compliments to all friends, more particularly to those I most value (that includes Mr. Foley if he is at Paris.)

I am yours most truly,

L. STERNE.

LETTER LXIV.

To the same.

Florence, December 18, 1765.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE been a month passing the plains of Lombardy—stopping in my way at Milan, Parma, Piacenza, and Bologna—with weather as delicious as a kindly April in England, and have been three days in

crossing a part of the Apennines covered with thick snow—Sad transition!—I stay here three days to dine with our Plenipo. Lords Tichfield and Cowper, and in five days shall tread the Vatican and be introduced to all the Saints in the Pantheon.—I stay but fourteen days to pay these civilities, and then decamp for Naples.—Pray send the inclosed to my wife, and Becket's letter to London.

Yours truly,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER LXV.

To Miss Sterne.

Naples, February 3; 1766.

My dear Girl,

**Y**OUR letter, my Lydia, has made me both laugh and cry—Sorry am I that you are both so afflicted with the ague, and by all means I wish you both to fly from Tours, because I remember it is situated between two rivers, la Loire, and le Cher—which must occasion fogs, and damp unwholesome weather—therefore for the same reason go not to Bourges en Bresse—'tis as vile a place for agues.—I find myself infinitely better than I was—and hope to have added at least ten years to my life by this journey to Italy—the climate is heavenly, and I find new principles of health in me, which I have been

long a stranger to—but trust me, my Lydia, I will find you out wherever you are, in May. Therefore I beg you to direct to me at Belloni's at Rome, that I may have some idea where you will be then.—The account you give me of Mrs. C—— is truly amiable, I shall ever honour her—Mr. C. is a diverting companion—what he said of your little French admirer was truly droll—the Marquis de —— is an impostor, and not worthy of your acquaintance—he only pretended to know me, to get introduced to your mother—I desire you will get your mother to write to Mr. C. that I may discharge every debt, and then my Lydia, if I live, the produce of my pen shall be yours—If fate reserves me not that—the humane and good, part for thy father's sake, part for thy own, will never abandon thee!—If your mother's health will permit her to return with me to England, your summers I will render as agreeable as I can at Coxwold—your winters at York—you know my publications call me to London.—If Mr. and Mrs. C—are still at Tours, thank them from me for their cordiality to my wife and daughter. I have purchased you some little trifles, which I shall give you when we meet, as proofs of affection from

Your fond father,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER LXVI.

To Mr. Panchaud at Paris.

Naples, February 8, 1766.

Dear Sir,

I Desire Mrs. Sterne may have what cash she wants —if she has not received it before now: she sends me word she has been in want of cash these three weeks—be so kind as to prevent this uneasiness to her—which is doubly so to me.—I have made very little use of your letters of credit, having since I left Paris taken up no more money than about fifty louis at Turin, as much at Rome—and a few ducats here—and as I now travel from hence to Rome, Venice, through Vienna to Berlin, &c. with a gentleman of fortune, I shall draw for little more till my return—so you will have always enough to spare for my wife.—The beginning of March be so kind as to let her have a hundred pounds to begin her year with.—

There are a good many English here, very few in Rome, or other parts of Italy.—The air of Naples agrees very well with me—I shall return fat—my friendship to all who honour me with theirs—Adieu my dear friend—I am ever yours,

L. STERNE.

LETTER LXVII.

To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.

Naples, February 5, 1766.

My dear H.

'TIS an age since I have heard from you—but as I read the London Chronicle, and find no tidings of your death, or that you are even at the point of it, I take it, as I wish it, that you have got over thus much of the winter free from the damps, both of climate and spirits, and here I am, as happy as a king after all, growing fat, sleek, and well liking—not improving in stature, but in breadth.—We have a jolly carnival of it—nothing but operas—punchinellos—festinos and masquerades—We (that is, *nous autres*) are all dressing out for one this night at the Princess Francavivalla, which is to be superb.—The English dine with her (exclusive) and so much for small chat—except that I saw a little comedy acted last week with more expression and spirit, and true character than I shall see one hastily again.—I stay here till the holy week, which I shall pass at Rome, where I occupy myself a month—My plan was to have gone from thence for a fortnight to Florence—and then by Leghorn to Marseilles directly home—but am diverted from this by the repeated proposals of accompanying a gentleman, who is returning by Venice, Vienna, Saxony, Berlin, and so by the Spaw, and thence through Holland to England—'tis with Mr. Errington. I have known him

these three years, and have been with him ever since I reach'd Rome; and as I know him to be a good hearted young gentleman, I have no doubt of making it answer both his views and mine—at least I am persuaded we shall return home together, as we set out, with friendship and good will.—Write your next letter to me at Rome, and do me the following favour if it lies in your way, which I think it does—to get me a letter of recommendation to our ambassador (Lord Stormont at Vienna.) I have not the honour to be known to his lordship, but Lords Pitt or Hertford, or twenty you better know, would write a certificate for me, importing that I am not fallen out of the clouds. If this will cost my cousin little trouble, do inclose it in your next letter to me at Belloni.—You have left Skelton I trow a month, and I fear have had a most sharp winter, if one may judge of it from the severity of the weather here, and all over Italy, which exceeded any thing known till within these three weeks here, that the sun has been as hot as we could bear it.—Give my kind services to my friends—especially to the household of faith—my dear Garland—to Gilbert—to the worthy Colonel—to Cardinal Scroope, to my fellow labourer Pantagruel—dear cousin Antony, receive my kindest love and wishes.

Yours affectionately,

L. STERNE.

*P. S.* Upon second thoughts, direct your next to me at Mr. Watson banker at Venice.



## LETTER LXVIII.

To Mr. Panchaud at Paris.

Nap'les, February 14, 1766.

Dear Sir,

**I** Wrote last week to you, to desire you would let Mrs. Sterne have what money she wanted—it may happen, as that letter went inclosed in one to her at Tours, that you will receive this first—I have made little use of your letters of credit, as you will see by that letter, nor shall I want much (if any) till you see me, as I travel now in company with a gentleman—However as we return by Venice, Vienna, Berlin, &c. to the Spaw, I should be glad if you will draw me a letter of credit upon some one at Venice, to the extent of fifty louis—but I am persuaded I shall not want half of them—however in case, of sickness or accidents, one would not go so long a route without money in one's pocket.—The bankers here are not so conscientious as my friend Panchaud; they would make me pay twelve per cent, if I was to get a letter here.—I beg your letters, &c. may be inclosed to Mr. Watson at Venice—where we shall be in the Ascension.—I have received much benefit from the air of Naples—but quit it to be at Rome before the holy week.—There are about five and twenty English here—but most of them will be decamp'd in two months—there are scarce a third of the number at Rome—I suppose therefore that Paris is full—my warmest wishes attend you—with my love to Mr.

Foley and compliments to all- - -I am, dear Sir, very faithfully,

Yours,

L. STERNE.

Sir James Macdonald is in the house with me, and is just recovering a long and most cruel fit of the rheumatism.

## LETTER LXIX.

To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.

May 25, near Dijon [1766].

Dear Antony,

**M**Y desire of seeing both my wife and girl has turn'd me out of my road towards a delicious Chateau of the Countess of M——, where I have been patriarching it these seven days with her ladyship, and half a dozen of very handsome and agreeable ladies--her ladyship has the best of hearts--a valuable present not given to every one.--To-morrow, with regret, I shall quit this agreeable circle, and post it night and day to Paris, where I shall arrive in two days, and just wind myself up, when I am there, enough to roll on to Calais—so I hope to sup with you the king's birth day, according to a plan of sixteen days standing.----Never man has been such a wild-goose chase after a wife as I have been—after having sought her in five or six different towns, I found her at

last in *Franche Comté*---Poor woman! she was very cordial, &c. and begs to stay another year or so---my Lydia pleases me much—I found her greatly improved in every thing I wish'd her—I am most unaccountably well, and most accountably unnonsensical—'tis at least a proof of good spirits, which is a sign and token given me in these latter days that I must take up again the pen.---In faith I think I shall die with it in my hand; but I shall live these ten years, my Antony, notwithstanding the fears of my wife, whom I left most melancholy on that account.---This is a delicious part of the world; most celestial weather, and we lie all day, without damps, upon the grass---and that is the whole of it, except the inner man (for her ladyship is not stingy of her wine) is inspired twice a day with the best Burgundy that grows upon the mountains, which terminate our lands here.---Surely you will not have decamp'd to Crazy Castle before I reach town.---The summer here is set in good earnest---'tis more than we can say for Yorkshire—I hope to hear a good tale of your alum works—have you no other works in hand? I do not expect to hear from you, so God prosper you---and all your undertakings.---I am, my dear cousin,

Most affectionately yours,

L. STERNE.

Remember me to Mr. Garland, Cardinal Scroope, the Col. Hall &c. &c. &c.

## LETTER LXX.

To Mr. Panchaud at Paris.

York, June 28, 1766.

Dear Sir,

**I** Wrote last week to Mr. Becket to discharge the balance due to you--and I have receiv'd a letter from him telling me, that if you will draw upon him for one hundred and sixty pounds, he will punctually pay it to your order--so send the draughts when you please--Mrs. Sterne writes me word, she wants fifty pounds--which I desire you will let her have.--I will take care to remit it to your correspondent--I have such an entire confidence in my wife, that she spends as little as she can, tho' she is confined to no particular sum—her expences will not exceed three hundred pounds a year, unless by ill health, or a journey--and I am very willing she should have it--and you may rely, in case it ever happens that she should draw for fifty or a hundred pounds extraordinary, that it and every demand shall be punctually paid--and with proper thanks; and for this the whole Shandean family are ready to stand security.--'Tis impossible to tell you how sorry I was that my affairs hurried me so quick thro' Paris, as to deprive me of seeing my old friend Mr. Foley and of the pleasure I proposed in being made known to his better half--but I have a

probability of seeing him this winter.—Adieu dear Sir,  
and believe me

Most cordially yours,

L. STERNE.

*P. S.* Mrs. Sterne is going to Chalon, but your letter will find her I believe at Avignon—she is very poorly—and my daughter writes to me with sad grief of heart, that she is worse.

LETTER LXXI.

To Mr. <sup>1</sup>S.

Coxwould, July 23, 1766.

Dear Sir,

ONE might be led to think that there is a fatality regarding us—we make appointments to meet, and for these two years have not seen each other's face but twice—we must try, and do better for the future—having sought you with more zeal, than C . . . sought the Lord, in order to deliver you the books you bad me purchase for you at Paris—I was forced to pay carriage for them from London to York—but as I shall neither charge you the books nor the carriage—'tis not worth talking about.—Never man, my dear Sir, has had a more agreeable tour than your Yorick—and at present I am in my peaceful retreat, writing the ninth volume of Tris-

<sup>1</sup>Probably, Selwin, the banker.

tram—I shall publish but one this year, and the next I shall begin a new work of four volumes, which when finish'd, I shall continue *Tristram* with fresh spirit.—What a difference of scene here! But with a disposition to be happy, 'tis neither this place, nor t'other that renders us the reverse.—In short each man's happiness depends upon himself—he is a fool if he does not enjoy it.

What are you about, dear S——? Give me some account of your pleasures—you had better come to me for a fortnight, and I will shew, or give you (if needful) a practical dose of my philosophy; but I hope you do not want it—if you did—'twould be the office of a friend to give it—Will not even our races tempt you? You see I use all arguments—Believe me yours most truly,

LAURENCE STERNE.

## LETTER LXXII.

To Mr. Panchaud at Paris.

Coxwould, September 21, 1766.

My dear Friend,

**I**F Mrs. Sterne should draw upon you for fifty louis d'ors, be so kind as to remit her the money—and pray be so good as not to draw upon Mr. Becket for it (as he owes me nothing) but favour me with the draught, which I will pay to Mr. Selwin.—A young nobleman is now

negociating a jaunt with me for six weeks, about Christmas, to the Fauxbourg de St. Germain—I should like much to be with you for so long—and if my wife should grow worse (having had a very poor account of her in my daughter's last) I cannot think of her being without me—and however expensive the journey would be, I would fly to Avignon to administer consolation to both her and my poor girl—Wherever I am, believe me

Dear Sir, yours,

L. STERNE.

My kind compliments to Mr. Foley: though I have not the honour of knowing his rib, I see no reason why I may not present all due respects to the better half of so old a friend, which I do by these presents—with my friendliest wishes to Miss Panchaud.

LETTER LXXIII.

To Mr. Foley at Paris.

Coxwould, October 25, 1766.

My dear Foley,

I Desired you would be so good as to remit to Mrs. Sterne fifty louis, a month ago—I dare say you have done it—but her illness must have cost her a good deal—therefore having paid the last fifty pounds into Mr. Selwin's hands, I beg you to send her thirty guineas



more—for which I send a bank bill to Mr. Becket by this post—but surely had I not done so, you would not stick at it—for be assured, my Foley, that the first Lord of the Treasury is neither more able or more willing (nor perhaps half so punctual) in repaying with honour all I ever can be in your books.—My daughter says her mother is very ill—and I fear going fast down by all accounts—'tis melancholy in her situation to want any aid that is in my power to give—do write to her—and believe me, with all compliments to your Hotel,

Yours very truly,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER LXXIV.

To Mr. Panchaud.

York, November 25, 1766.

Dear Sir,

**I** Just received yours—and am glad that the balance of accounts is now paid to you—Thus far all goes well—I have received a letter from my daughter with the pleasing tidings that she thinks her mother out of danger—and that the air of the country is delightful (excepting the winds) but the description of the Chateau my wife has hired is really pretty—on the side of the Fountain of Vaucluse—with seven rooms of a floor, half furnished with tapestry, half with blue taffety, the permission to fish, and to have game; so many partridges a week, &c.

and the price—guess! sixteen guineas a year—there's for you Panchaud. About the latter end of next month my wife will have occasion for a hundred guineas—and pray be so good, my dear sir, as to give orders that she may not be disappointed—she is going to spend the Carnival at Marseilles at Christmas—I shall be in London by Christmas week, and then shall balance this remittance to Mrs. Sterne with Mr. Selwin. I am going to ly in of another child of the Shandaick procreation, in town—I hope you wish me a safe delivery—I fear my friend Mr. Foley will have left town before I get there—Adieu dear Sir—I wish you every thing in this world which will do you good, for I am with unfeigned truth,

Yours,

L. STERNE.

Make my compliments acceptable to the good and worthy Baron D'Holbach—Miss Panchaud &c. &c.

LETTER LXXV.

To the same.

London, February 13, 1767.

Dear P.

**I** Paid yesterday (by Mr. Becket) a hundred guineas, or pounds I forget which, to Mr. Selwin—But you must remit to Mrs. Sterne at Marseilles a hundred louis before she leaves that place which will be in less than three weeks. Have you got the ninth volume of Shandy?—

'tis liked the best of all here.—I am going to publish a Sentimental Journey through France and Italy—the undertaking is protected and highly encouraged by all our noblesse—'tis subscribed for, at a great rate—'twill be an original—in large quarto—the subscription half a guinea—If you can procure me the honour of a few names of men of science, or fashion, I shall thank you—they will appear in good company, as all the nobility here almost have honoured me with their names.—My kindest remembrance to Mr. Foley—respects to Baron D'Holbach, and believe me ever ever yours,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER LXXVI.

To Miss Sterne.

Old Bond-street, February 23, 1767.

AND so, my Lydia! thy mother and thyself are re-  
turning back again from Marseilles to the banks of  
the Sorgue—and there thou wilt sit and fish for trouts—  
I envy you the sweet situation.—Petrarch's tomb I  
should like to pay a sentimental visit to—the Foun-  
tain of Vaucluse, by thy description, must be delightful  
—I am also much pleased with the account you give me  
of the Abbé de Sade—you find great comfort in such a  
neighbour—I am glad he is so good as to correct thy  
translation of my Sermons—dear girl, go on, and make  
me a present of thy work—but why not the House of

Mourning? 'tis one of the best. I long to receive the life of Petrarch, and his Laura, by your Abbé, but I am out of all patience with the answer the Marquis made the Abbé—'twas truly coarse, and I wonder he bore it with any christian patience—But to the subject of your letter—I do not wish to know who was the busy fool, who made your mother uneasy about Mrs. Draper 'tis true I have a friendship for her, but not to infatuation—I believe I have judgment enough to discern hers, and every woman's faults. I honour thy mother for her answer—"that she wished not to be informed, and begged him to drop the subject."—Why do you say that your mother wants money?—whilst I have a shilling, shall you not both have ninepence out of it?—I think if I have my enjoyments, I ought not to grudge you yours.—I shall not begin my Sentimental Journey till I get to Coxwold—I have laid a plan for something new, quite out of the beaten track.—I wish I had you with me—and I would introduce you to one of the most amiable and gentlest of beings, whom I have just been with—not Mrs. Draper, but a Mrs. James, the wife of as worthy a man as I ever met with—I esteem them both. He possesses every manly virtue—honour and bravery are his characteristics, which have distinguished him nobly in several instances—I shall make you better acquainted with his character, by sending Orme's History, with the books you desired—and it is well worth your reading; for Orme is an elegant writer, and a just one; he pays no man a compliment at the expence of truth.—Mrs. James is kind—and friendly—of a sentimental turn of mind—and so sweet a disposition, that she is too good for the world she lives in—Just God! if all were like her, what a life would this be!—Heaven, my Lydia, for some wise purpose has

created different beings—I wish my dear child knew her - - -thou art worthy of her friendship, and she already loves thee ; for I sometimes tell her what I feel for thee. —This is a long letter—write soon, and never let your letters be studied ones- - -write naturally, and then you will write well.---I hope your mother has got quite well of her ague---I have sent her some of Huxham's tincture of the Bark. I will order you a guittar since the other is broke. Believe me, my Lydia, that I am yours affectionately,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER LXXVII.

To Mr. Panchaud at Paris.

London, February 27, 1767.

Dear Sir,

MY Daughter begs a present of me, and you must know I can deny her nothing- - -It must be strung with cat-gut, and of five chords---*si chiama in Italiano la chitera di cinque corde*—she cannot get such a thing at Marseilles- - -at Paris one may have every thing- - -Will you be so good to my girl as to make her happy in this affair, by getting some musical body to buy one, and send it her to Avignon directed to Monsieur Teste?---I wrote last week to desire you would remit Mrs. Sterne a hundred louis---'twill be all, except the guittar, I shall owe

you---send me your account, and I will pay Mr. Selwin  
---direct to me at Mr. Becket's---all kind respects to my  
friend Mr. Foley and your sister.

Yours cordially,

L. S T E R N E .

LETTER \* L X X V I I .

To David Garrick, Esq.

Thursday, Eleven o'Clock—Night.

[About April, 1760]

Dear Sir,

'T WAS for all the world like a cut across my finger  
with a sharp penknife.—I saw the blood—gave it a  
suck—wrapt it up—and thought no more about it.

But there is more goes to the healing of a wound than  
this comes to:—a wound (unless 'tis a wound not worth  
talking of, but by the bye mine is) must give you some  
pain after.—Nature will take her own way with it—it  
must ferment—it must digest.

The story you told me of Tristram's pretended tutor,  
this morning—My letter by right should have set out  
with this sentence, and then the simile would not have  
kept you a moment in suspense.

This vile story, I say—tho' I then saw both how, and where it wounded—I felt little from it at first—or, to speak more honestly (tho' it ruins my simile) I felt a great deal of pain from it, but affected an air usual on such accidents, of less feeling than I had.

I have now got home to my lodgings since the play (you astonished me in it) and have been unwrapping this self-same wound of mine, and shaking my head over it this half hour.

What the devil!—is there no one learned blockhead throughout the many schools of misapplied science in the Christian World, to make a *tutor* of for my Tristram?—*Ex quovis ligno non sit*.—Are we so run out of stock, that there is no one lumber-headed, muddle-headed, mortar-headed, pudding-headed *chap* amongst our doctors?—Is there no one single wight of much reading and no learning, amongst the many children in my *mother's* nursery, who bid high for this charge—but I must disable my judgment by choosing a Warburton? Vengeance! have I so little concern for the honour of my hero!—Am I a wretch so void of sense, so bereft of feeling for the figure he is to make in story, that I should chuse a præceptor to rob him of all the immortality I intended him? O! dear Mr. Garrick.

Malice is ingenious—unless where the excess of it outwits itself—I have two comforts in this stroke of it;—the first is, that this one is partly of this kind; and secondly, that it is one of the number of those which so unfairly brought poor Yorick to his grave.— -The report might draw blood of the author of Tristram Shandy—but



could not harm such a man as the author of the *Divine Legation*—God bless him! though (by the bye, and according to the natural course of descents) the blessing should come from him to me.

Pray have you no interest, lateral or collateral, to get me introduced to his Lordship?

Why do you ask?

My dear Sir, I have no claim to such an honour, but what arises from the honour and respect which, in the progress of my work, will be shewn the world I owe to so great a man.

Whilst I am talking of owing—I wish, my dear Sir, that any body would tell you, how much I am indebted to you.—I am determined never to do it myself, or say more upon the subject than this, that I am yours,

L. STERNE.

LETTER LXXVIII.

To Miss Sterne.

Bond Street, April 9, 1767.

**T**HIS letter, my dear Lydia, will distress thy good heart, for from the beginning thou wilt perceive no entertaining strokes of humour in it—I cannot be chearful when a thousand melancholy ideas surround me—I have met with a loss of near fifty pounds, which I was

taken in for in an extraordinary manner—but what is that loss in comparison of one I may experience?—Friendship is the balm and cordial of life, and without it, 'tis a heavy load not worth sustaining.—I am unhappy—thy mother and thyself at a distance from me, and what can compensate for such a destitution?—For God's sake persuade her to come and fix in England, for life is too short to waste in separation—and whilst she lives in one country, and I in another, many people will suppose it proceeds from choice—besides I want thee near me, thou child and darling of my heart!—I am in a melancholy mood, and my Lydia's eyes will smart with weeping when I tell her the cause that now affects me.—I am apprehensive the dear friend I mentioned in my last letter is going into a decline—I was with her two days ago, and I never beheld a being so alter'd—she has a tender frame, and looks like a drooping lily, for the roses are fled from her cheeks—I can never see or talk to this incomparable woman without bursting into tears—I have a thousand obligations to her, and I owe her more than her whole sex, if not all the world put together.—She has a delicacy in her way of thinking that few possess—our conversations are of the most interesting nature, and she talks to me of quitting this world with more composure than others think of living in it.—I have wrote an epitaph, of which I send thee a copy.—'Tis expressive of her modest worth—but may heav'n restore her! and may she live to write mine!

Columns, and labour'd urns but vainly shew,  
An idle scene of decorated woe.  
The sweet companion, and the friend sincere,  
Need no mechanic help to force the tear.

In heartfelt numbers, never meant to shine  
 'Twill flow eternal o'er a hearse like thine;  
 'Twill flow, whilst gentle goodness has one friend,  
 Or kindred tempers have a tear to lend.

Say all that is kind of me to thy mother, and believe me,  
 my Lydia, that I love thee most truly—So adieu—I am  
 what I ever was, and hope ever shall be, thy

Affectionate Father,

L. S.

As to Mr. ——— by your description he is a fat fool.  
 I beg you will not give up your time to such a being—  
 Send me some *batons pour les dents*—there are none good  
 here.

## LETTER LXXIX.

To Mr. and Mrs. James.

Old Bond-street, April 21, 1767.

I Am sincerely affected, my dear Mr. and Mrs. James,  
 by your friendly enquiry, and the interest you are so  
 good to take in my health. God knows I am not able to  
 give a good account of myself, having passed a bad night  
 in much feverish agitation.—My physician ordered me  
 to bed, and to keep therein 'till some favourable change  
 —I fell ill the moment I got to my lodgings—he says it  
 is owing to my taking James's Powder, and venturing

out on so cold a day as Sunday—but he is mistaken, for I am certain whatever bears that name must have efficacy with me—I was bled yesterday, and again to day, and have been almost dead; but this friendly enquiry from Gerrard-street has poured balm into what blood I have left—I hope still (and next to the sense of what I owe my friends) it shall be the last pleasurable sensation I will part with—if I continue mending, it will yet be some time before I shall have strength enough to get out in a carriage—my first visit will be a visit of true gratitude—I leave my kind friends to guess where—a thousand blessings go along with this, and may heaven preserve you both—Adieu my dear sir, and dear lady.

I am your ever obliged,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER LXXX.

To the Earl of Shelburne.

Old Bond-street, May [2]1, 1767.

My Lord,

**I** Was yesterday taking leave of all the town, with an intention of leaving it this day, but I am detained by the kindness of lord and lady Spencer, who have made a party to dine and sup on my account—I am impatient to set out for my solitude, for there the mind gains strength, and learns to lean upon herself—In the world it seeks or

accepts of a few treacherous supports—the feigned compassion of one—the flattery of a second—the civilities of a third—the friendship of a fourth—they all deceive, and bring the mind back to where mine is retreating, to retirement, reflection, and books. My departure is fixed for tomorrow morning, but I could not think of quitting a place where I have received such numberless and unmerited civilities from your lordship, without returning my most grateful thanks, as well as my hearty acknowledgments for your friendly enquiry from Bath. Illness, my lord, has occasioned my silence—Death knocked at my door, but I would not admit him—the call was both unexpected and unpleasant—and I am seriously worn down to a shadow—and still very weak, but weak as I am, I have as whimsical a story to tell you as ever befel one of my family—Shandy's nose, his name, his sash window, are fools to it—it will serve at least to amuse you—The injury I did myself last month, in catching cold upon James's Powder—fell, you must know, upon the worst part it could—the most painful, and most dangerous of any in the human body. It was on this crisis I called in an able surgeon and with him an able physician (both my friends) to inspect my disaster—'tis a venereal case, cried my two scientific friends—'tis impossible, however, to be that, replied I—for I have had no commerce whatever with the sex, not even with my wife, added I, these fifteen years.—You are, however, my good friend, said the surgeon, or there is no such case in the world—what the devil, said I, without knowing woman?—We will not reason about it, said the physician, but you must undergo a course of mercury—I will lose my life first, said I—and trust to nature, to time, or at the worst to death—so I put an end, with some indignation, to the conference—and

determined to bear all the torments I underwent, and ten times more, rather than submit to be treated like a *sinner*, in a point where I had acted like a *saint*.——Now as the father of mischief would have it, who has no pleasure like that of dishonouring the righteous, it so fell out that from the moment I dismissed my doctors, my pains began to rage with a violence not to be expressed, or supported. Every hour became more intolerable.—I was got to bed, cried out, and raved the whole night, and was got up so near dead, that my friends insisted upon my sending again for my physician and surgeon. I told them upon the word of a man of honour they were both mistaken, as to my case—but though they had reasoned wrong, they might act right; but that sharp as my sufferings were, I felt them not so sharp as the imputation which a venereal treatment of my case laid me under—They answered that these taints of the blood laid dormant twenty years; but they would not reason with me in a point wherein I was so delicate, but would do all the office for which they were called in, namely to put an end to my torment, which otherwise would put an end to me—and so I have been compelled to surrender myself—and thus, my dear lord, has your poor friend with all his sensibilities been suffering the chastisement of the grossest sensualist.—Was it not as ridiculous an embarrassment as ever Yorick's spirit was involved in?—Nothing but the purest conscience of innocence could have tempted me to write this story to my wife, which by the bye would make no bad anecdote in Tristram Shandy's Life—I have mentioned it in my journal to Mrs. Draper. In some respects there is no difference between my wife and herself—when they fare alike, neither can reasonably complain.—I have just received letters from France, with some hints



that Mrs. Sterne and my Lydia are coming to England, to pay me a visit—if your time is not better employed, Yorick flatters himself he shall receive a letter from your lordship, *en attendant*. I am with the greatest regard,

my Lord,

your Lordship's

most faithful humble servant,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER LXXXII.

To J. Dillon, Esq.

Old Bond-street, Friday Morning.

**I** Was going, my dear Dillon, to bed before I received your kind enquiry, and now my chaise stands at my door to take and convey this poor body to its legal settlement.—I am ill, very ill—I languish most affectingly—I am sick both soul and body—it is a cordial to me to hear it is different with you—no man interests himself more in your happiness, and I am glad you are in so fair a road to it—enjoy it long, my Dillon whilst I—no matter what—but my feelings are too nice for the world I live in—things will mend.—I dined yesterday with lord and lady Spencer; we talked much of you, and your goings on, for every one knows why Sunbury Hill is so pleasant a situa-



tion.—You rogue! you have lock'd up my boots—and I go bootless home—and fear I shall go bootless all my life—Adieu, gentlest and best of souls—adieu.

I am yours most affectionately,

L. STERNE.

### LETTER LXXXIII.

To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.

Newark, Monday ten o'clock in the morn.

My dear Cousin,

I Have got conveyed thus far like a bale of cadaverous goods consigned to Pluto and company—lying in the bottom of my chaise most of the rout, upon a large pillow which I had the *prevoyance* to purchase before I set out—I am worn out—but press on to Barnby Moor to night, and if possible to York the next.—I know not what is the matter with me—but some *derangement* presses hard upon this machine—still I think it will not be upset this bout.—My love to G.— We shall all meet from the east, and from the south, and (as at the last) be happy together—My kind respects to a few.—I am, dear Hall.

truly yours,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER LXXXIV.

From Ignatius Sancho, to Mr. Sterne.

Reverend Sir,

[1766]

I T would be an insult on your humanity (or perhaps look like it,) to apologize for the liberty I am taking.—I am one of those people whom the vulgar and illiberal call negroes.—The first part of my life was rather unlucky, as I was placed in a family who judged ignorance the best and only security for obedience.—A little reading and writing I got by unwearied application.—The latter part of my life has been, thro' God's blessing, truly fortunate—having spent it in the service of one of the best and greatest families in the kingdom—my chief pleasure has been books—Philanthropy I adore—How very much, good Sir, am I (amongst millions) indebted to you for the character of your amiable Uncle Toby!—I declare I would walk ten miles in the dog-days, to shake hands with the honest Corporal.—Your sermons have touch'd me to the heart, and I hope have amended it, which brings me to the point—In your tenth discourse, page seventy-eight, in the second volume—is this very affecting passage—"Consider how great a part of our species in all ages down to this—have been trod under the feet of cruel and capricious tyrants, who would neither hear their cries, nor pity their distresses.—Consider slavery—what it is—how bitter a draught—and how many millions are made to drink of it."—Of all my favourite authors not one has drawn a tear in favour of my miserable black brethren—excepting yourself, and the

humane author of Sir Geo. Ellison.—I think you will forgive me; I am sure you will applaud me for beseeching you to give one half hour's attention to slavery, as it is at this day practised in our West Indies.—That subject handled in your striking manner would ease the yoke (perhaps) of many—but if only of one—gracious God! what a feast to a benevolent heart! and sure I am, you are an epicurean in acts of charity.—You who are universally read, and as universally admired—you could not fail.—Dear Sir, think in me you behold the uplifted hands of thousands of my brother Moors. Grief (you pathetically observe) is eloquent: figure to yourself their attitudes; hear their supplicating addresses!—alas! you cannot refuse.—Humanity must comply—in which hope I beg permission to subscribe myself,

Reverend Sir, &c.

I. S.

## LETTER LXXXV.

From Mr. Sterne, to Ignatius Sancho.

Coxwold, July 27, 1766.

THERE is a strange coincidence, Sancho, in the little events (as well as in the great ones) of this world: for I had been writing a tender tale of the sorrows of a friendless poor negro-girl, and my eyes had scarce done smarting with it, when your letter of recommendation, in behalf of so many of her brethren and sisters, came to me—but why *her brethren*? or yours, Sancho!

any more than mine? It is by the finest tints, and most insensible gradations, that nature descends from the fairest face about St. James's, to the sootiest complexion in Africa:—at which tint of these is it, that the ties of blood are to cease? and how many shades must we descend lower still in the scale, ere mercy is to vanish with them? But 'tis no uncommon thing, my good Sancho, for one half of the world to use the other half of it like brutes, and then endeavour to make 'em so.—For my own part, I never look *westward*, (when I am in a pensive mood at least) but I think of the burthens which our brothers and sisters are *there* carrying, and could I ease their shoulders from one ounce of them, I declare I would set out this hour upon a pilgrimage to Mecca, for their sakes—which by the bye, Sancho, exceeds your walk of ten miles in about the same proportion, that a visit of humanity should one of mere form.—However, if you meant my Uncle Toby, more he is your debtor.—If I can weave the tale I have wrote into the work I am about—'tis at the service of the afflicted—and a much greater matter; for in serious truth, it casts a sad shade upon the world, that so great a part of it are, and have been so long bound in chains of darkness, and in chains of misery; and I cannot but both respect and felicitate you, that by so much laudable diligence you have broke the one—and that by falling into the hands of so good and merciful a family, Providence has rescued you from the other.

And so good-hearted Sancho adieu! and believe me I will not forget your letter.

Yours,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER LXXXVI.

To Ignatius Sancho.

Bond Street, Saturday [April 25], 1767.

I Was very sorry, my good Sancho, that I was not at home to return my compliments by you for the great courtesies of the Duke of Montagu's family to me, in honouring my list of subscribers with their names—for which I bear them all thanks.—But you have something to add, Sancho, to what I owe your good will also on this account, and that is to send me the subscription money, which I find a necessity of dunning my best friends for before I leave town—to avoid the perplexities of both keeping pecuniary accounts (for which I have very slender talents) and collecting them (for which I have neither strength of body or mind) and so, good Sancho dun the Duke of Montagu the Duchess of Montagu and Lord Montagu for their subscriptions, and lay the sin, and money with it too, at my door—I wish so good a family every blessing they merit, along with my humblest compliments. You know, Sancho, that I am your end and well-wisher.

L. STERNE.

*P. S.* I leave town on Friday morning—and should on Thursday, but that I stay to dine with Lord and Lady Spencer.

## LETTER LXXXVII.

To Ignatius Sancho.

Coxwould, June 30 [1767].

**I** Must acknowledge the courtesy of my good friend Sancho's letter, were I ten times busier than I am, and must thank him too for the many expressions of his good will, and good opinion—'Tis all affectation to say a man is not gratified with being praised—we only want it to be sincere—and then it will be taken, Sancho, as kindly as yours. I left town very poorly—and with an idea I was taking leave of it for ever—but good air, a quiet retreat, and quiet reflections along with it, with an ass to milk, and another to ride out upon (if I chuse it) all together do wonders.—I shall live this year at least, I hope, be it but to give the world, before I quit it, as good impressions of me, as you have, Sancho. I would only covenant for just so much health and spirits, as are sufficient to carry my pen thro' the task I have set it this summer.—But I am a resign'd being, Sancho, and take health and sickness, as I do light and darkness, or the vicissitudes of seasons—that is, just as it pleases God to send them—and accommodate myself to their periodical returns, as well as I can—only taking care, whatever befalls me in this silly world—not to lose my temper at it.—This I believe, friend Sancho, to be the truest philosophy—for this we must be indebted to ourselves, but not to our fortunes.—Farewel—I hope you will not forget your custom of giving me a

call at my lodgings next winter—in the mean time, I am very cordially,

My honest friend Sancho,

Yours,

L. STERNE.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

To Mrs. H.

Coxwould, October 12, 1767.

**E**VER since my dear Hannah wrote me word she was mine, more than ever woman was, I have been racking my memory to inform me where it was that you and I had that affair together.—People think that I have had many, some in body, some in mind; but as I told you before, you have had me more than any woman—therefore you must have had me, Hannah, both in mind, and in body.—Now I cannot recollect where it was, nor exactly when—it could not be the lady in Bond-street, or Grosvenor-street, or ——— Square, or Pall-mall.—We shall make it out, Hannah when we meet—I impatiently long for it—’tis no matter—I cannot now stand writing to you to-day—I will make it up next post—for dinner is upon table, and if I make Lord Fauconberg stay, he will not frank this.—How do you do? Which parts of Tristram do you like best?—God bless you.

Yours,

L. STERNE.



LETTER LXXXIX.

To Mrs. H.

Coxwould, Nov. 15, 1767.

NOW be a good dear woman, my Hannah, and execute these commissions well—and when I see you I will give you a kiss—there's for you!—But I have something else for you which I am fabricating at a great rate, and that is my Sentimental Journey, which shall make you cry as much as it has affected me—or I will give up the business of sentimental writing—and write to the body—that is Hannah what I am doing in writing to you—but you are a *good body*, which is worth half a score mean souls.—

I am yours, &c. &c.

L. SHANDY.

LETTER XC.

To his Excellency Sir G. Macartney.

Coxwould, December 3, 1767.

My dear Friend,

FOR tho' you are his Excellency, and I still but parson Yorick—I still must call you so—and were you to be next Emperor of Russia, I could not write to you, or speak of you, under any other relation—I felicitate you, I don't say how much, because I can't—I always had something like a kind of revelation within me, which

pointed out this track for you, in which you are so happily advanced—it was not only my wishes for you, which were ever ardent enough to impose upon a visionary brain, but I thought I actually saw you just where you now are—and that is just, my dear Macartney, where you should be.—I should long, long ago have acknowledged the kindness of a letter of yours from Petersbourg; but hearing daily accounts you was leaving it—this is the first time I knew well *where* my thanks would find you—how they will find you, I know well—that is—the same I ever knew you. In three weeks I shall kiss your hand—and sooner, if I can finish my Sentimental Journey.—The duce take all sentiments! I wish there was not one in the world!—My wife is come to pay me a sentimental visit as far as from Avignon—and the *politesses* arising from such a proof of her urbanity, has robb'd me of a month's writing, or I had been in town now.—I am going to ly-in; being at Christmas at my full reckoning—and unless what I shall bring forth is not *press'd* to death by these devils of printers, I shall have the honour of presenting to you a *couple of as clean brats* as ever chaste brain conceiv'd—they are frolicksome too,—*mais cela n'empeche pas*—I put your name down with many wrong and right *honourables*, knowing you would take it not well if I did not make myself happy with it.

Adieu my dear friend,

Believe me yours, &c.

L. STERNE.

P. S. If you see Mr. Crawford, tell him I greet him kindly.

LETTER XCI.

To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.

**L**ITERAS vestras lepidissimas, mi consobrine, consobrinis meis omnibus carior, accepi die Veneris; sed postea non rediebat versus Aquilonem eo die, aliter scripsissem prout desiderabas: nescio quid est materia cum me, sed sum fatigatus & ægrotus de meâ uxore plus quam unquam—& sum possessus cum diabolo qui pellet me in urbem—& tu es possessus cum eodem malo spiritu qui te tenet in deserto esse tentatum ancillis tuis, et perturbatum uxore tuâ—crede mihi, mi Antoni, quod isthæc non est via ad salutem sive hodiernam, sive æternam; num tu incipis cogitare de pecuniâ, quæ, ut ait Sanctus Paulus, est radix omnium malorum, & non satis dicis in corde tuo, ego Antonius de Castello Infirmo, sum jam quadraginta & plus annos natus, & explevi octavum meum lustrum, et tempus est me curare, & meipsum Antonium facere hominem felicem & liberum, et mihi met ipsi benefacere, ut exhortatur Solomon, qui dicit quod nihil est melius in hâc vitâ, quàm quòd homo vivat festivè, & quòd edat et bibat, & bono fruatur, quia hoc est sua portio & dos in hoc mundo.

Nunc te scire vellemus, quòd non debeo esse reprehendi pro festinando eundo ad Londinum, quia Deus est testis, quod non propero præ gloriâ, & pro me ostendere; nam diabolus iste qui me intravit, non est diabolus vanus, at consobrinus suus Lucifer—sed est diabolus amabundus, qui non vult sinere me esse solum; nam cum non

cumbendo cum uxore meâ sum mentulatioꝛ quam par eſt —& ſum mortaliter in amore—& ſum fatuus; ergo tu me, mi care Antoni, excuſabis, quoniam tu fuiſti in amore, & per mare & per terras iviſti & feſtinaſti ſicut diabolus, eodem te propellente diabolo. Habeo multa ad te ſcribere—ſed ſcribo hanc epiſtolam, in domo coffeatoriâ & plenâ ſociorum ſtrepitoſorum, qui non permittent me cogitare unam cogitationem.

Saluta amicum Panty meum, cujus literis reſpondebo —ſaluta amicos in domo Giſbrosenſi, & oro, credas me vinculo conſobrinitatis & amoris ad te, mi Antoni, devinctiſſimum,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XCII.

To A. Lee, Eſq.

Coxwould, June 7, 1767.

Dear Lee,

**I** Had not been many days at this peaceful cottage before your letter greeted me with the ſeal of friendſhip, and moſt cordially do I thank you for ſo kind a proof of your good will—I was truly anxious to hear of the recovery of my ſentimental friend—but I would not write to enquire after her, unleſs I could have ſent her the teſtimony without the tax, for even how-d'yes to invalids, or thoſe that have lately been ſo, either call to mind what is paſt or what may return—at leaſt I find it ſo.—I

am as happy as a prince, at Coxwould——and I wish you could see in how princely a manner I live—'tis a land of plenty. I sit down alone to venison, fish and wild fowl, or a couple of fowls or ducks, with curds, and strawberries, and cream, and all the simple plenty which a rich valley (under Hamilton Hills) can produce—with a clean cloth on my table—and a bottle of wine on my right hand to drink your health. I have a hundred hens and chickens about my yard—and not a parishioner catches a hare, or a rabbit, or a trout, but he brings it as an offering to me. If solitude would cure a love-sick heart, I would give you an invitation—but absence and time lessen no attachment which virtue inspires.—I am in high spirits;---care never enters this cottage—I take the air every day in my post chaise, with my two long tail'd horses——they turn out good ones; and as to myself, I think I am better upon the whole for the medicines, and regimen I submitted to in town—May you, dear Lee, want neither the one, nor the other.

Yours truly,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XCIII.

To the same.

Coxwould, June 30, 1767.

**I** Am in still better health, my dear Lee, than when I wrote last to you—owing I believe to my riding out every day with my friend Hall whose castle lies near the sea—and there is a beach as even as a mirrour, of five

miles in length before it—where we daily run races in our chaises, with one wheel in the sea, and the other on the land.—Dillon has obtain'd his fair Indian, and has this post sent a letter of enquiries after Yorick, and his Bramine. He is a good soul and interests himself much in our fate—I cannot forgive you, Lee, for your folly in saying you intend to get introduced to the —— I despise them, and I shall hold your understanding much cheaper than I now do, if you persist in a resolution so unworthy of you.—I suppose Mrs. James telling you they were sensible, is the ground work you go upon—by—they are not clever; tho' what is commonly call'd wit, may pass for literature on the other side of Temple-bar.—You say Mrs. James thinks them amiable—she judges too favourably; but I have put a stop to her intentions of visiting them.—They are bitter enemies of mine, and I am even with them. La Bramine assured me they used their endeavours with her to break off her friendship with me, for reasons I will not write, but tell you.—I said enough of them before she left England, and tho' she yielded to me in every other point, yet in this she obstinately persisted.—Strange infatuation!—but I think I have effected my purpose by a falsity, which Yorick's friendship to the Bramine can only justify.—I wrote her word that the most amiable of women reiterated my request, that she would not write to them. I said too, she had conceal'd many things for the sake of her peace of mind—when in fact, Lee, this was merely a child of my own brain, made Mrs. James by adoption, to enforce the argument I had before urged so strongly.—Do not mention this circumstance to Mrs. James, 'twould displease her—and I had no design in it but for the Bramine to be a friend to herself.—I ought now to be busy



from sun rise, to sun set, for I have a book to write—a wife to receive—and estate to sell—a parish to superintend, and what is worst of all, a disquieted heart to reason with—these are continual calls upon me.—I have receiv'd half a dozen letters to press me to join my friends at Scarborough, but I am at present deaf to them all.—I perhaps may pass a few days there something later in the season, not at present—and so dear Lee, adieu.

I am most cordially yours,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XCIV.

To Mr. and Mrs. James.

Coxwold, July 6, 1767.

**I**T is with as much true gratitude as ever heart felt, that I sit down to thank my dear friends Mr. and Mrs. James for the continuation of their attention to me; but for this last instance of their humanity and politeness to me, I must ever be their debtor—I never can thank you enough, my dear friends, and yet I thank you from my soul—and for the single day's happiness your goodness would have sent me, I wish I could send you back thousands—I cannot, but they will come of themselves—and so God bless you.—I have had twenty times my pen in my hand since I came down to write a letter to you both in Gerrard-street—but I am a shy kind of a soul at the bottom, and have a jealousy about troubling my friends, especially about myself.—I am now got perfectly well,



but was, a month after my arrival in the country, in but a poor state—my body has got the start, and is at present more at ease than my mind—but this world is a school of trials, and so heaven's will be done!—I hope you have both enjoyed all that I have wanted—and to compleat your joy, that your little lady flourishes like a vine at your table, to which I hope to see her preferred by next winter.—I am now beginning to be truly busy at my Sentimental Journey—the pains and sorrows of this life having retarded its progress—but I shall make up my lee-way, and overtake every body in a very short time.—

What can I send you that Yorkshire produces? tell me—I want to be of use to you, for I am, my dear friends, with the truest value and esteem,

your ever obliged,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XCV.

To Mr. Panchaud at Paris.

York, July 20, 1767

My dear Panchaud,

**B**E so kind as to forward what letters are arrived for Mrs. Sterne at your office by to-day's post, or the next, and she will receive them before she quits Avignon for England—she wants to lay out a little money in an annuity for her daughter—advise her to get her own life

ensured in London, lest my Lydia should die before her.—If there are any packets, send them with the ninth volume of Shandy, which she has failed of getting—she says she has drawn for fifty louis—when she leaves Paris, send by her my account.—Have you got me any French subscriptions, or subscriptions in France?—Present my kindest service to Miss Panchaud. I know her politeness and good nature will incline her to give Mrs. J. her advice about what she may venture to bring over.—I hope every thing goes on well, though never half so well as I wish.—God prosper you, my dear friend—Believe me most warmly

Yours,

L. STERNE.

The sooner you send me the gold snuff-box, the better—'tis a present from my best friend.

## LETTER XCVI.

To Mr. and Mrs. James.

Coxwould, August 2, 1767.

**M**Y dear friends Mr. and Mrs. James are infinitely kind to me in sending now and then a letter to enquire after me—and to acquaint me how they are.—You cannot conceive, my dear lady, how truly I bear a part in your illness.—I wish Mr. James would carry you to the south of France in pursuit of health—but why need I

wish it, when I know his affection will make him do that and ten times as much to prevent a return of those symptoms which alarmed him so much in the spring—Your politeness and humanity are always contriving to treat me agreeably, and what you promise next winter, will be perfectly so—but you must get well—and your little dear girl must be of the party, with her parents and friends, to give it a relish—I am sure you shew no partiality but what is natural and praise-worthy, in behalf of your daughter, but I wonder my friends will not find her a play-fellow; and I both hope and advise them not to venture along through this warfare of life without two strings at least to their bow.—I had letters from France by last night's post, by which (by some fatality) I find not one of my letters has reached Mrs. Sterne. This gives me concern, as it wears the aspect of unkindness, which she by no means merits from me.—My wife and dear girl are coming to pay me a visit for a few months; I wish I may prevail with them to tarry longer.—You must permit me dear Mrs. James to make my Lydia known to you, if I can prevail with my wife to come and spend a little time in London, as she returns to France.—I expect a small parcel—may I trouble you before you write next, to send to my lodgings to ask if there is any thing directed to me that you can enclose under cover?—I have but one excuse for this freedom, which I am prompted to use, from a persuasion that it is doing you pleasure to give you an opportunity of doing an obliging thing—and as to myself, I rest satisfied, for 'tis only scoring up another debt of thanks to the millions I owe you both already—Receive a thousand and a thousand thanks, yes, and with them ten thousand friendly wishes for all you wish in this world—May my friend Mr. James continue bless'd with good

health, and may his good lady get perfectly well, there being no woman's health or comfort I so ardently pray for.—Adieu my dear friends—believe me most truly and faithfully yours,

L. STERNE.

P. S. In Eliza's last letter, dated from St. Jago she tells me, as she does you, that she is extremely ill—God protect her.—By this time surely she has set foot upon dry land at Madras—I heartily wish her well, and if Yorick was with her, he would tell her so—but he is cut off from this, by bodily absence—I am present with her in spirit however—but what is that? you will say.

## LETTER XCVII.

To John Hall Stevenson, Esq.

Coxwold, August 11, 1767.

My dear Hall,

I Am glad all has passed with so much amity *inter te & filium Marcum tuum*, and that Madame has found grace in thy sight—All is well that ends well—and so much for moralizing upon it. I wish you could, or would, take up your parable, and prophecy as much good concerning me and my affairs.—Not one of my letters has got to Mrs. Sterne since the notification of her intentions, which has a pitiful air on my side, though I have wrote her six

or seven.—I imagine she will be here the latter end of September, though I have no date for it, but her impatience, which, having suffered by my supposed silence, I am persuaded will make her fear the worst—if that is the case, she will fly to England—a most natural conclusion.—You did well to discontinue all commerce with James's powder—as you are so well, rejoice therefore, and let your heart be merry—mine ought upon the same score—for I never have been so well since I left college—and should be a marvellous happy man, but for some reflections which bow down my spirits—but if I live but even three or four years, I will acquit myself with honour—and—no matter! we will talk this over when we meet.—If all ends as temperately as with you, and that I find grace, &c. &c. I will come and sing *Te Deum*, or drink *poculum elevatum*, or do any thing with you in the world.—I should depend upon G—'s critick upon my head, as much as Moliere's old woman upon his comedies—when you do not want her society, let it be carried into your bed-chamber to flay her, or clap it upon her bum—to —— and give her my blessing as you do it——

My postillion has set me a-ground for a week, by one of my pistols bursting in his hand, which he taking for granted to be quite shot off—he instantly fell upon his knees and said (Our Father, which art in Heaven, hal-  
lowed be thy Name) at which, like a good Christian, he stopped, not remembering any more of it—the affair was not so bad as he at first thought, for it has only *bursten* two of his fingers (he says).—I long to return to you, but I sit here alone as solitary and sad as a tom cat, which by the bye is all the company I keep—he follows me from the parlour, to the kitchen, into the garden, and every

place—I wish I had a dog—my daughter will bring me one—and so God be about you, and strengthen your faith—I am affectionately, dear cousin, yours,

L. S.

My service to the Crofts, though they are from home, and to Panty.

## LETTER XCVIII.

To Mr. and Mrs. James.

Coxwold, August 13, 1767.

My dear Friends,

**I** But copy your great civility to me in writing you word, that I have this moment received another letter wrote eighteen days after the date of the last from St. Jago—If our poor friend could have wrote another letter to England, you would in course have had it—but I fear from the circumstance of great hurry and bodily disorder in which she was, when she dispatched this, she might not have time.—In case it has so fallen out, I send you the contents of what I have received—and that is a melancholy history of herself and sufferings, since they left St. Jago—continual and most violent rheumatism all the time—a fever brought on with fits, and attended with delirium, and every terrifying symptom—the recovery from this left her low and emaciated to a skeleton.—I give you the pain of this detail with a bleeding heart,



knowing how much at the same time it will affect yours.—The three or four last days of her journal leave us with hopes she will do well at last, for she is more chearful—and seems to be getting into better spirits; and health will follow in course. They have crossed the line—are much becalmed, by which, with other delays, she fears they will lose their passage to Madras—and be some months sooner for it at Bombay.—Heav'n protect her, for she suffers much, and with uncommon fortitude.—She writes much to me about her dear friend Mrs. James in her last packet.—In truth, my good lady, she loves and honours you from her heart, but if she did not, I should not esteem her, or wish her so well as I do.—Adieu, my dear friends—you have few in the world more truly and cordially

Yours,

L. STERNE.

P. S. I have just received, as a present from a man I shall ever love, a most elegant gold snuff box, fabricated for me at Paris—'tis not the first pledge I have received of his friendship.—May I presume to enclose you a letter of chit-chat which I shall write to Eliza? I know you will write yourself, and my letter may have the honour to *chaperon* yours to India—they will neither of them be the worse received for going together in company, but I fear they will get late in the year to their destined port, as they go first to Bengal.



## LETTER XCIX.

To Miss Sterne.

Coxwold, August 24, 1767.

I Am truly surprised, my dear Lydia, that my last letter has not reached thy mother, and thyself—it looks most unkind on my part, after your having wrote me word of your mother's intention of coming to England, that she has not received my letter to welcome you both—and though in that I said I wished you would defer your journey 'till March, for before that time I should have published my sentimental work, and should be in town to receive you—yet I will shew you more real politesses than any you have met with in France, as mine will come warm from the heart.—I am sorry you are not here at the races, but *les fêtes champêtres* of the Marquis de Sade have made you amends.—I know B—— very well, and he is what in France would be called admirable—that would be but so so here—you are right—he studies nature more than any, or rather most of the French comedians—If the Empress of Russia pays him and his wife a pension of twenty thousand livres a year, I think he is very well off.—The folly of staying 'till after twelve for supper—that you two excommunicated beings might have meat!—"his conscience would not let it be served before."—Surely the Marquis thought you both, being English, could not be satisfied without it.—I would have given not my gown and cassock (for I have but one) but my topaz ring, to have seen the *petits maitres et maitresses* go to mass, after having spent the night in dancing.—As to

my pleasures, they are few in compass.—My poor cat sits purring beside me—your lively French dog shall have his place on the other side of my fire—but if he is as devilish as when I last saw him, I must tutor him, for I will not have my cat abused—in short I will have nothing devilish about me—a combustion would spoil a sentimental thought.

Another thing I must desire—do not be alarmed—'tis to throw all your rouge pots into the Sorgue before you set out—I will have no rouge put on in England—and do not bewail them as ——— did her silver seringue or glyster equipage which she lost in a certain river—but take a wise resolution of doing without rouge.—I have been three days ago bad again—with a spitting of blood—and that unfeeling brute <sup>1</sup>\* \* \* \* \* came and drew my curtains, and, with a voice like a trumpet, halloo'd in my ear—Z---ds, what a fine kettle of fish have you brought yourself to, Mr. Sterne! In a faint voice, I bad him leave me, for comfort sure was never administered in so rough a manner.—Tell your mother, I hope she will purchase what either of you may want at Paris—'tis an occasion not to be lost—so write to me from Paris, that I may come and meet you in my post-chaise with my long-tailed horses—and the moment you have both put your feet in it, call it hereafter yours.—Adieu dear Lydia—believe me, what I ever shall be,

Your affectionate father,

L. STERNE.

I think I shall not write to Avignon any more, but you will find one for you at Paris—once more adieu.

<sup>1</sup>Probably Dr. Dealtry, Sterne's physician.

LETTER C.

To Sir William Stanhope.

September 19, 1767.

My dear Sir,

**Y**OU are perhaps the drollest being in the universe —Why do you banter me so about what I wrote to you?—Tho' I told you every morning I jump'd into Venus's lap (meaning thereby the sea) was you to infer from that, that I leap'd into the ladies beds afterwards?—The body guides you—the mind me.—I have wrote the most whimsical letter to a lady that was ever read, and talk'd of body and soul too—I said she had made me vain, by saying she was mine more than ever woman was—but she is not the lady of Bond-street nor ——— square, nor the lady who supp'd with me in Bond-street on scollop'd oysters, and other such things—nor did she ever go *tete-a-tete* with me to Salt Hill.—Enough of such nonsense—The past is over—and I can justify myself unto myself—can you do as much?—No faith!—"You can feel!" Aye so can my cat, when he hears a female caterwauling on the house top—but caterwauling disgusts me. I had rather raise a gentle flame, than have a different one raised in me.—Now, I take heav'n to witness, after all this *badinage*, my heart is innocent—and the sporting of my pen is equal, just equal, to what I did in my boyish days, when I got astride of a stick, and gallop'd away—The truth is this—that my pen governs me——not me

my pen.—You are much to blame if you dig for marle, unless you are sure of it.—I was once such a puppy myself, as to pare, and burn, and had my labour for my pains, and two hundred pounds out of pocket.—Curse on farming (said I) I will try if the pen will not succeed better than the spade.—The following up of that affair (I mean farming) made me lose my temper, and a cart load of turneps was (I thought) very dear at two hundred pounds.—

In all your operations may your own good sense guide you—bought experience is the devil.—Adieu, adieu!—Believe me

Yours most truly,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER CI.

To the same.

Coxwould, Sept. 27, 1767.

Dear Sir,

**Y**OU are arrived at Scarborough, when all the world has left it—but you are an unaccountable being, and so there is nothing more to be said on the matter—You wish me to come to Scarborough, and join you to read a work that is not yet finish'd—besides I have other things, in my head.—My wife will be here in three or four days, and I must not be found straying in the wilderness—but

I have been there.—As for meeting you at Bluit's, with all my heart—I will laugh, and drink my barley water with you.—As soon as I have greeted my wife and daughter, and hired them a house at York, I shall go to London, where you generally are in spring—and then my Sentimental Journey will, I daresay, convince you that my feelings are from the heart, and that that heart is not of the worst of molds—praised be God for my sensibility! Though it has often made me wretched, yet I would not exchange it for all the pleasures the grossest sensualist ever felt.—Write to me the day you will be at York—'tis ten to one but I may introduce you to my wife and daughter. Believe me,

My good Sir,

Ever yours,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER CII.

To Mr. Panchaud at Paris.

York, October 1, 1767.

Dear Sir,

I Have order'd my friend Becket to advance for two months your account which my wife this day deliver'd ----she is in raptures with all your civilities.----This is to give you notice to draw upon your correspondent----and Becket will deduct out of my publication.----Tomorrow

morning I repair with her to Coxwoud, and my Lydia seems transported with the sight of me.---Nature, dear Panchaud, breathes in all her composition; and except a little vivacity—which is a fault in the world we live in---I am fully content with her mother's care of her.---Pardon this digression from business---but 'tis natural to speak of those we love.---As to the subscriptions which your friendship has procured me, I must have them to incorporate with my lists which are to be prefix'd to the first volume.—My wife and daughter join in millions of thanks—they will leave me the 1st of December.---Adieu, adieu!—believe me,

Yours most truly,

L. STERNE.

### LETTER CIII.

To Mr. and Mrs. James.

Coxwoud, October 3, 1767.

**I** Have suffered under a strong desire for above this fortnight, to send a letter of enquiries after the health and the well-being of my dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. James; and I do assure you both, 'twas merely owing to a little modesty in my temper not to make my goodwill troublesome, where I have so much, and to those I never think of, but with ideas of sensibility and obligation, that I have refrain'd.—Good God! to think I could

be in town, and not go the first step I made to Gerrard Street!—My mind and body must be at sad variance with each other, should it ever fall out that it is not both the first and last place also where I shall betake myself, were it only to say, “God bless you.”—May you have every blessing he can send you! ’tis a part of my litany, where you will always have a place whilst I have a tongue to repeat it.—And so you heard I had left Scarborough, which you would no more credit, than the reasons assign’d for it—I thank you for it kindly—tho’ you have not told me what they were: being a shrewd divine, I think I can guess.—I was ten days at Scarborough in September, and was hospitably entertained by one of the best of our Bishops; who, as he kept house there, press’d me to be with him——and his household consisted of a gentleman, and two ladies—which, with the good Bishop, and myself, made so good a party that we kept much to ourselves.—I made in this time a connection of great friendship with my mitred host, who would gladly have taken me with him back to Ireland.—However, we all left Scarborough together, and lay fifteen miles off, where we kindly parted——Now it was supposed (and have since heard) that I e’en went on with the party to London, and this I suppose was the reason assign’d for my being there.—I dare say charity would add a little to the account, and give out that ’twas on the score of one, and perhaps both of the ladies—and I will excuse charity on that head, for a heart disengaged could not well have done better.—I have been hard writing ever since—and hope by Christmas I shall be able to give a gentle rap at your door—and tell you how happy I am to see my two good friends.—I assure you I spur on my Pegasus more violently upon that account, and am now determined not to



draw bit, till I have finish'd this Sentimental Journey——which I hope to lay at your feet, as a small (but a very honest) testimony of the constant truth, with which I am,

My dear friends,

Your ever obliged

And grateful,

L. STERNE.

*P. S.* My wife and daughter arrived here last night from France.—My girl has return'd an elegant accomplish'd little slut—my wife——but I hate to praise my wife—'tis as much as decency will allow to praise my daughter.—I suppose they will return next summer to France.—They leave me in a month to reside at York for the winter—and I stay at Coxwold till the first of January.

## LETTER CIV.

To Mrs. Ferguson.

Coxwold, Friday. [October, 1767.]

Dear Madam,

**I** Return you a thousand thanks for your obliging enquiry after me—I got down last summer very much worn out—and much worse at the end of my journey—I was forced to call at his Grace's house (the Archbishop of York) to refresh myself a couple of days

upon the road near Doncaster—Since I got home to quietness, and temperance, and good books, and good hours, I have mended—and am now very stout—and in a fortnight's time shall perhaps be as well as you yourself could wish me.—I have the pleasure to acquaint you that my wife and daughter are arrived from France.—I shall be in town to greet my friends by the first of January.—Adieu dear madam—believe me

Yours sincerely,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER CV.

To Mr. and Mrs. James.

Coxwoud, November 12, 1767.

**F**ORGIVE me, dear Mrs. James, if I am troublesome in writing something betwixt a letter and a card, to enquire after you and my good friend Mr. James, whom, 'tis an age since I have heard a syllable of.—I think so however, and never more felt the want of a house I esteem so much, as I do now when I can hear tidings of it so seldom—and have nothing to recompence my desires of seeing its kind possessors, but the hopes before me of doing it by Christmas.—I long sadly to see you—and my friend Mr. James. I am still at Coxwoud—my wife and girl<sup>1</sup> here.—She is a dear good creature—

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Medalle thinks an apology may be necessary for publishing this letter—the best she can offer is—that it was written by a fond parent (whose commendations she is proud of) to a very sincere friend.

affectionate, and most elegant in body, and mind—she is all heaven could give me in a daughter—but like other blessings, not given, but lent; for her mother loves France—and this dear part of me must be torn from my arms, to follow her mother, who seems inclined to establish her in France, where she has had many advantageous offers.—Do not smile at my weakness, when I say I don't wonder at it, for she is as accomplish'd a slut as France can produce.—You shall excuse all this—if you won't, I desire Mr. James to be my advocate—but I know I don't want one.—With what pleasure shall I embrace your dear little pledge—who I hope to see every hour encreasing in stature, and in favour, both with God and man!—I kiss all your hands with a most devout and friendly heart.—No man can wish you more good than your meager friend does—few so much, for I am with infinite cordiality, gratitude and honest affection,

My dear Mrs. James,

Your ever faithful,

L. STERNE.

*P. S.* My Sentimental Journey will please Mrs. James, and my Lydia—I can answer for those two. It is a subject which works well, and suits the frame of mind I have been in for some time past—I told you my design in it was to teach us to love the world and our fellow creatures better than we do—so it runs most upon those gentler passions and affections, which aid so much to it.—Adieu, and may you and my worthy friend Mr. James continue examples of the doctrine I teach.

## LETTER CVI.

To A. Lee, Esq.

Coxwould, November 19, 1767.

**Y**OU make yourself unhappy, dear Lee, by imaginary ills—which you might shun, instead of putting yourself in the way of.—Would not any man in his senses fly from the object he adores, and not waste his time and his health in increasing his misery by so vain a pursuit?—The idol of your heart is one of ten thousand.—The duke of ——— has long sighed in vain—and can you suppose a woman will listen to you, that is proof against titles, stars, and red ribbands?—Her heart (believe me, Lee) will not be taken in by fine men, or fine speeches—if it should ever feel a preference, it will chuse an object for itself, and it must be a singular character that can make an impression on such a being—she has a platonic way of thinking, and knows love only by name—the natural reserve of her character, which you complain of, proceeds not from pride, but from a superiority of understanding, which makes her despise every man that turns himself into a fool—Take my advice, and pay your addresses to Miss ——— she esteems you, and time will wear off an attachment which has taken so deep a root in your heart.—I pity you from my soul—but we are all born with passions which ebb and flow (else they would play the devil with us) to different objects—and the best advice I can give you, Lee, is to turn the tide of yours another way.—I know not whether I shall

write again while I stay at Coxwoud.—I am in earnest at my sentimental work—and intend being in town soon after Christmas—in the mean time adieu.—Let me hear from you, and believe me, dear Lee.

Yours, &c.

L. STERNE.

## LETTER CVII.

To the Earl of Shelburne.

Coxwoud, November 28, 1767.

My Lord,

**T**IS with the greatest pleasure I take my pen to thank your Lordship for your letter of enquiry about Yorick—he has worn out both his spirits and body with the Sentimental Journey—'tis true that an author must feel himself, or his reader will not—but I have torn my whole frame into pieces by my feelings—I believe the brain stands as much in need of recruiting as the body—therefore I shall set out for town the twentieth of next month, after having recruited myself a week at York.—I might indeed solace myself with my wife, (who is come from France), but in fact I have long been a sentimental being—whatever your Lordship may think to the contrary.—The world has imagined, because I wrote *Tristram Shandy*, that I was myself more Shandean than I really ever was—'tis a good-natured world we live in, and

we are often painted in divers colours, according to the ideas each one frames in his head.——A very agreeable lady arrived three years ago at York, in her road to Scarborough—I had the honour of being acquainted with her, and was her *chaperon*—all the females were very inquisitive to know who she was—“Do not tell, ladies, ’tis a mistress my wife has recommended to me—nay, moreover has sent her from France.”——

I hope my book will please you, my Lord, and then my labour will not be totally in vain. If it is not thought a chaste book, mercy on them that read it, for they must have warm imaginations indeed!—Can your Lordship forgive my not making this a longer epistle?——In short I can but add this, which you already know—that I am with gratitude and friendship,

My Lord,

Your obedient faithful,

L. STERNE.

If your Lordship is in town in Spring, I should be happy if you became acquainted with my friends in Gerrard-street—you would esteem the husband, and honour the wife—she is the reverse of most her sex—they have various pursuits—she but one—that of pleasing her husband.—

## LETTER CVIII.

To A. Lee, Esq.

Coxwould, December 7, 1767.

Dear Lee

I Said I would not perhaps write any more, but it would be unkind not to reply to so interesting a letter as yours—I am certain you may depend upon Lord ——’s promises—he will take care of you in the best manner he can, and your knowledge of the world, and of languages in particular, will make you useful in any department—If his Lordship’s scheme does not succeed, leave the kingdom—go to the east, or the west, for travelling would be of infinite service to both your body and mind—But more of this when we meet—now to my own affairs.—I have had an offer of exchanging two pieces of preferment I hold here, for a living of three hundred and fifty pounds a year, in Surry, about thirty miles from London, and retaining Coxwould, and my prebendaryship—the country also is sweet—but I will not, cannot come to any determination, till I have consulted with you, and my other friends.—I have great offers too in Ireland—the bishops of Cork, and Ross, are both my friends—but I have rejected every proposal, unless Mrs. Sterne, and my Lydia could accompany me thither—I live for the sake of my girl, and with her sweet light burthen in my arms, I could get up fast the hill of preferment, if I chose it—but without my Lydia, if a mitre was offered



me, it would sit uneasy upon my brow.—Mrs. Sterne's health is insupportable in England.—She must return to France, and justice and humanity forbid me to oppose it.—I will allow her enough to live comfortably, until she can rejoin me.—My heart bleeds, Lee, when I think of parting with my child——'twill be like the separation of soul and body—and equal to nothing but what passes at that tremendous moment; and like it in one respect, for she will be in one kingdom, whilst I am in another.—You will laugh at my weakness—but I cannot help it—for she is a dear, disinterested girl—As a proof of it—when she left Coxwold, and I bad her adieu, I pulled out my purse and offered her ten guineas for her private pleasures—her answer was pretty, and affected me too much. “No, my dear papa, our expences of coming from France may have straiten'd you—I would rather put an hundred guineas in your pocket than take ten out of it.”—I burst into tears—but why do I practice on your feelings—by dwelling on a subject that will touch your heart?—It is too much melted already by its own sufferings, Lee, for me to add a pang, or cause a single sigh.—God bless you—I shall hope to greet you by New-years-day in perfect health—Adieu my dear friend—I am most truly and cordially yours,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER CIX.

To Mr. and Mrs. James.

York, December 23, 1767.

I Was afraid that either Mr. or Mrs. James, or their little blossom, was drooping—or that some of you were ill, by not having the pleasure of a line from you, and was thinking of writing again to enquire after you all——when I was cast down myself with a fever, and bleeding at my lungs, which had confined me to my room near three weeks——when I had the favour of yours, which till to-day, I have not been able to thank you both kindly for, as I most cordially now do—as well as for all your professions and proofs of good will to me.—I will not say I have not balanced accounts with you in this—All I know is, that I honour and value you more than I do any good creatures upon earth—and that I could not wish your happiness, and the success of whatever conduces to it, more than I do, was I your brother—but, good God! are we not all brothers and sisters who are friendly, virtuous, and good? Surely, my dear friends, my illness has been a sort of sympathy for your afflictions upon the score of your dear little one.—I am worn down to a shadow—but as my fever has left me, I set off the latter end of next week with my friend Mr. Hall for town—I need not tell my friends in Gerrard-street, I shall do myself the honour to visit them, before either Lord———or Lord———, &c. &c.—I thank you, my dear friend, for what you say so kindly about my daughter—it shews your good heart,

for as she is a stranger, 'tis a free gift in you—but when she is known to you, she shall win it fairly—but, alas! when this event is to happen, is in the clouds.—Mrs. Sterne has hired a house ready furnish'd at York, till she returns to France, and my Lydia must not leave her.—

What a sad scratch of a letter!—but I am weak, my dear friends, both in body and mind—so God bless you—you will see me enter like a ghost—so I tell you beforehand not to be frightened.—I am, my dear friends, with the truest attachment and esteem, ever yours,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER CX.

To Lady Percy.

Mount Coffee-house, Tuesday, 3 o'Clock.

[April 25, 1765]

**T**HERE is a strange mechanical effect produced in writing a billet-doux within a stone-cast of the lady who engrosses the heart and soul of an inamorato—for this cause (but mostly because I am to dine in this neighbourhood) have I, Tristram Shandy, come forth from my lodgings to a coffee-house the nearest I could find to my dear Lady Percy's house, and have called for a sheet of gilt paper, to try the truth of this article of my creed—Now for it—

O my dear lady—what a dishclout of a soul hast thou

made of me?—I think, by the bye, this is a little too familiar an introduction, for so unfamiliar a situation as I stand in with you—where heaven knows, I am kept at a distance—and despair of getting one inch nearer you, with all the steps and windings I can think of to recommend myself to you—Would not any man in his senses run diametrically from you—and as far as his legs would carry him, rather than thus causelessly, foolishly, and fool-hardily expose himself afresh—and afresh, where his heart and his reason tells him he shall be sure to come off loser, if not totally undone?—Why would you tell me you would be glad to see me?—Does it give you pleasure to make me more unhappy—or does it add to your triumph, that your eyes and lips have turned a man into a fool, whom the rest of the town is courting as a wit?—I am a fool—the weakest, the most ductile, the most tender fool, that ever woman tried the weakness of—and the most unsettled in my purposes and resolutions of recovering my right mind.—It is but an hour ago, that I kneeled down and swore I never would come near you—and after saying my Lord's Prayer for the sake of the close, *of not being led into temptation*—out I sallied like any Christian hero, ready to take the field against the world, the flesh, and the devil; not doubting but I should finally trample them all down under my feet—and now am I got so near you—within this vile stone's cast of your house—I feel myself drawn into a vortex, that has turned my brain upside downwards, and though I had purchased a box ticket to carry me to Miss Wilford's benefit, yet I know very well, that was a single line directed to me, to let me know Lady Percy would be alone at seven, and suffer me to spend the evening with her, she would infallibly see every thing verified I have told her.—I dine at

Mr. Cowper's in Wigmore-street, in this neighbourhood, where I shall stay till seven, in hopes you purpose to put me to this proof. If I hear nothing by that time I shall conclude you are better disposed of—and shall take a sorry hack, and sorrily jogg on to the play—Curse on the word. I know nothing but sorrow—except this one thing, that I love you (perhaps foolishly, but)

most sincerely,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER CXI.

To Mr. and Mrs. James.

Old Bond Street, January 3 [1768].

**N**OT knowing whether the moisture of the weather will permit me to give my kind friends in Gerrard Street a call this morning for five minutes—I beg leave to send them all the good wishes, compliments, and respects I owe them.—I continue to mend, and doubt not but this, with all other evils and uncertainties of life, will end for the best. I send all compliments to your fire sides this Sunday night—Miss Ascough the wise, Miss Pigot the witty, your daughter the pretty, and so on.—If Lord Ossory is with you, I beg my dear Mrs. James will present the enclosed to him——'twill add to the millions of obligations I already owe you.—I am sorry that I am no subscriber to Soho this season—it deprives me of a plea-

sure worth twice the subscription——but I am just going to send about this quarter of the town, to see if it is not too late to procure a ticket, undisposed of, from some of my Soho friends, and if I can succeed, I will either send or wait upon you with it by half an hour after three tomorrow- -if not, my friend will do me the justice to believe me truly miserable.--I am half engaged, or more, for dinner on Sunday next, but will try to get disengaged in order to be with my friends.--If I cannot, I will glide like a shadow uninvited to Gerrard Street some day this week, that we may eat our bread and meat in love and peace together.—God bless you both!-----I am with the most sincere regard,

Your ever obliged,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER CXII.

To the same.

Old Bond Street, Monday.

[Jan. 4, 1768]

My dear Friends,

I Have never been a moment at rest since I wrote yesterday about this Soho ticket—I have been at a Secretary of State to get one—have been upon one knee to my friends Sir George Macartney, Mr. Lascelles---and Mr. Fitzmaurice——without mentioning five more——I believe I could as soon get you a place at court, for

every body is going---but I will go out and try a new circle---and if you do not hear from me by a quarter after three, you may conclude I have been unfortunate in my supplications.---I send you this state of the affair, lest my silence should make you think I had neglected what I promised—but no---Mrs. James knows me better, and would never suppose it would be out of the head of one who is with so much truth

Her faithful friend,

L. STERNE.

### LETTER CXIII.

To the same.

Thursday, [Feb. 18, 1768] Old Bond Street.

A Thousand thanks, and as many excuses, my dear friends, for the trouble my blunder has given you. By a second note I am astonish'd I could read Saturday for Sunday, or make any mistake in a card wrote by Mrs. James, in which my friend is as unrival'd, as in a hundred greater excellencies.

I am now tyed down neck and heels (twice over) by engagements every day this week, or most joyfully would have trod the old pleasing road from Bond to Gerrard Street.---My books will be to be had on Thursday, but possibly on Wednesday in the afternoon.---I am quite well, but exhausted with a room full of company every



morning till dinner--How do I lament I cannot eat my morsel (which is always sweet) with such kind friends!---The Sunday following I will assuredly wait upon you both—and will come a quarter before four, that I may have both a little time, and a little day light, to see Mrs. James's picture.--I beg leave to assure my friends of my gratitude for all their favours, with my sentimental thanks for every token of their good will.—Adieu, my dear friends—

I am truly yours,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER CXIV.

To G. Selwin, Esq.

Old Bond Street, Wednesday. [Feb. 1768].

Dear Sir,

**Y**OUR commendations are very flattering. I know no one whose judgment I think more highly of, but your partiality for me is the only instance in which I can call it in question.—Thanks, my good sir, for the prints—I am much your debtor for them—if I recover from my ill state of health, and live to revisit Coxwould this summer, I will decorate my study with them, along with six beautiful pictures I have already of the sculptures on poor Ovid's tomb, which were executed on marble at Rome.—It grieves one to think such a man should have dy'd in exile, who wrote so well on the art of love.—Do not think me encroaching if I solicit a favour—'tis either

to borrow, or beg (to beg if you please) some of those touched with chalk which you brought from Italy—I believe you have three sets, and if you can spare the imperfect one of cattle on colour’d paper, ’twill answer my purpose, which is namely this, to give a friend of ours.—You may be ignorant she has a genius for drawing, and whatever she excells in, she conceals, and her humility adds lustre to her accomplishments—I presented her last year with colours, and an apparatus for painting, and gave her several lessons before I left town.—I wish her to follow this art, to be a compleat mistress of it—and it is singular enough, but not more singular than true, that she does not know how to make a cow or a sheep, tho’ she draws figures and landscapes perfectly well; which makes me wish her to copy from good prints.—If you come to town next week, and dine where I am engaged next Sunday, call upon me and take me with you—I breakfast with Mr. Beauclerc, and am engaged for an hour afterwards with Lord Ossory so let our meeting be either at your house or my lodgings—do not be late, for we will go half an hour before dinner, to see a picture executed by West, most admirably—he has caught the character of our friend—such goodness is painted in that face, that when one looks at it, let the soul be ever so much unharmonized, it is impossible it should remain so.—I will send you a set of my books—they will take with the generality—the women will read this book in the parlour, and Tristram in the bed-chamber.—Good night, dear sir.—I am going to take my whey, and then to bed. Believe me,

Yours most truly,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER CXV.

To Miss Sterne.

February 20, Old Bond Street. [1768]

My dearest Lydia,

**M**Y Sentimental Journey, you say, is admired in York by every one—and 'tis not vanity in me to tell you that it is no less admired here—but what is the gratification of my feelings on this occasion?—the want of health bows me down, and vanity harbours not in thy father's breast—this vile influenza—be not alarm'd, I think I shall get the better of it—and shall be with you both the first of May, and if I escape 'twill not be for a long period, my child—unless a quiet retreat and peace of mind can restore me.—The subject of thy letter has astonish'd me.—She could but know little of my feelings, to tell thee, that under the supposition I should survive thy mother, I should bequeath thee as a legacy to<sup>1</sup>——. No, my Lydia! 'tis a lady, whose virtues I wish thee to imitate, that I shall entrust my girl to—I mean that friend whom I have so often talk'd and wrote about—from her you will learn to be an affectionate wife, a tender mother, and a sincere friend—and you cannot be intimate with her, without her pouring some part of the milk of human kindness into your breast, which will serve to check the heat of your own temper, which you partake in a small degree of.—Nor will that amiable woman put my Lydia under the painful necessity to fly to India for pro-

<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Draper?

tection, whilst it is in her power to grant her a more powerful one in England.—But I think, my Lydia, that thy mother will survive me—do not deject her spirits with thy apprehensions on my account.—I have sent you a necklace, buckles, and the same to your mother.—My girl cannot form a wish that is in the power of her father, that he will not gratify her in—and I cannot in justice be less kind to thy mother.—I am never alone——The kindness of my friends is ever the same—I wish tho' I had thee to nurse me—but I am deny'd that.—Write to me twice a week, at least.—God bless thee, my child, and believe me ever, ever thy

Affectionate father,

L. S.

## LETTER CXVI.

To Mrs. James.

Tuesday [March 8, 1768]

**Y**OUR poor friend is scarce able to write—he has been at death's door this week with a pleurisy—I was bled three times on Thursday, and blister'd on Friday—The physician says I am better—-God knows, for I feel myself sadly wrong, and shall, if I recover, be a long while of gaining strength.- - -Before I have gone thro' half this letter, I must stop to rest my weak hand above a dozen times.- - -Mr. James was so good to call upon me yesterday. I felt emotions not to be described at the

sight of him, and he overjoy'd me by talking a great deal of you.—Do, dear Mrs. James, entreat him to come to-morrow, or next day, for perhaps I have not many days, or hours, to live—I want to ask a favour of him, if I find myself worse—-that I shall beg of you, if in this wrestling I come off conqueror—-my spirits are fled—-'tis a bad omen—-do not weep my dear Lady—your tears are too precious to shed for me—-bottle them up, and may the cork never be drawn.—-Dearest, kindest, gentlest, and best of women! may health, peace, and happiness prove your handmaids.—-If I die, cherish the remembrance of me, and forget the follies which you so often condemn'd—-which my heart, not my head betray'd me into. Should my child, my Lydia want a mother, may I hope you will (if she is left parentless) take her to your bosom?—-You are the only woman on earth I can depend upon for such a benevolent action.—-I wrote to her a fortnight ago, and told her what I trust she will find in you.—-Mr. James will be a father to her—-he will protect her from every insult, for he wears a sword which he has served his country with, and which he would know how to draw out of the scabbard in defence of innocence—Commend me to him—as I now commend you to that Being who takes under his care the good and kind part of the world.—Adieu——all grateful thanks to you and Mr. James,

Your poor affectionate friend,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER CXVII.

To Mr. Becket.

Exeter, July, 1775.

SIR,

**T**HIS was quite an *Impromptu* of Yorick's after he had been thoroughly *soused*.—He drew it up in a few moments without stopping his pen. I should be glad to see it in your intended collection of Mr. Sterne's memoirs, &c. If you should have a copy of it, you will be able to rectify a misapplication of a term that Mr. Sterne could never be guilty of, as one great excellence of his writings lies in the most happy choice of metaphors and allusions—such as shewed his philosophic judgement, at the same time that they displayed his wit and genius—but it is not for me to comment on, or correct so great an original. I should have sent this fragment as soon as I saw Mrs. Medalle's advertisement, had I not been at a distance from my papers. I expect much entertainment from this posthumous work of a man to whom no one is more indebted for amusement and instruction, than,

Sir,

Your humble servant,

S. P.

## AN IMPROMPTU.

**N**O—not one farthing would I give for such a coat in wet weather, or dry—If the sun shines you are sure of being melted, because it closes so tight about one—if it rains it is no more a defence than a cobweb—a very sieve, o’ my conscience! that lets through every drop, and like many other things that are put on only for a cover, mortifies you with disappointment and makes you curse the impostor, when it is too late to avail one’s self of the discovery. Had I been wise I should have examined the claim the coat had to the title of “defender of the body” —before I had trusted my body in it—I should have held it up to the light like other suspicious matters I have seen, how much it was likely to admit of that which I wanted to keep out—whether it was no more than such a frail, flimsy, contexture of flesh and blood, as I am fated to carry about with me through every tract of this dirty world, could have comfortably and safely dispensed within so short a journey—taking into my account the chance of spreading trees—thick hedges o’erhanging the road—with twenty other coverts that a man may thrust his head under—if he is not violently pushed on by that d—d stimulus—you know where—that will not let a man sit still in one place for half a minute together—but like a young mettlesome tit is eternally on the fret, and is for pushing on still farther—or if the poor scared devil is not hunted tantivy by a hue and cry with gyves and a halter dangling before his eyes—now, in either case, he has not a minute to throw away in standing still, but like king Lear must brave “the peltings of a pitiless storm” and



give heaven leave to “rumble its bellyfull —spit fire—or spout rain”—as spitefully as it pleaseth, without finding the inclination or the resolution to slacken his pace, lest something should be lost that might have been gained, or more gotten than he well knows how to get rid of—Now had I acted with as much prudence as some other good folks—I could name many of them who have been made bishops within my remembrance for having been hooded and muffled up in a larger quantity of this dark drab of mental manufacture than ever fell to my share—and absolutely for nothing else—as will be seen when they are undressed another day—Had I had but as much as might have been taken out of their cloth without lessening much of the size, or injuring in the least the shape, or contracting aught of the doublings and foldings, or continuing to a less circumference, the superb sweep of anyone cloak that any one bishop ever wrapt himself up in—I should never have given this coat a place upon my shoulders. I should have seen by the light at one glance, how little it would keep out of rain, by how little it would keep in of darkness—This a coat for a rainy day? do pray, madam, hold it up to that window—did you ever see such an *illustrious* coat since the day you could distinguish between a coat and a pair of breeches?—My lady did not understand derivatives, and so she could not see quite through my splendid pun. Pope Sixtus would have blinded her with the same “darkness of excessive light.” What a flood of it breaks in thro’ this rent? what an irradiation beams through that? what twinklings—what sparklings as you wave it before your eyes in the broad face of the sun? Make a fan out of it for the ladies to look at their gallants with at church—It has not served me for one purpose—it will serve them for two—This is coarse stuff

—of worse manufacture than the cloth—put it to its proper use, for I love when things sort and join well—make a philtre<sup>1</sup> of it—while there is a drop to be extracted—I know but one thing in the world that will draw, drain, or suck like it—and that is—neither wool nor flax—make—make any thing of it, but a vile, hypocritical coat for me—for I never can say *sub Jove* (whatever Juno might) that “it is a pleasure to *be wet*.”

L. STERNE.

<sup>1</sup> This allusion is improper. A philtre originally signifies a love potion—and as it is used as a noun from the verb *filtrate*—it must signify a *strainer*, not a *sucker*—cloth is sometimes used for the purpose of *draining* by means of its pores or capillary tubes, but its action is contrary to *filtration*. His meaning is obvious enough; but as he drew up this fragment without stopping his pen, as I was informed, it is no wonder he erred in the application of some of his terms.

ORIGINAL LETTERS OF  
THE LATE REVEREND  
Mr. LAURENCE STERNE

PUBLISHED IN 1788

ORIGINAL LETTERS OF THE LATE REVEREND  
MR. LAURENCE STERNE ; *never before published.*  
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*These letters, the majority of which appeared originally in The  
European Magazine, 1787-1788, were probably published  
by William Combe. Although freely used by the biographers  
of Sterne, they have never, we believe, been re-printed in  
a collected edition of his Writings, because they were sup-  
posed to be spurious. Professor Wilbur L. Cross, the latest  
biographer of Sterne, is convinced, however, that though  
some of the letters are of doubtful authenticity, and others  
have been edited to some extent, yet 'most of them are in sub-  
stance genuine beyond reasonable doubt.' They are here reprint-  
ed from the original edition, published in 1788, but the names  
have been completed where knowledge permits.*

# LETTERS PUBLISHED in 1788

## LETTER I.

To William Combe, Esq.

*Coxwold, July 1, 1764.*

I Am safe arrived at my bower—and I trust that you have no longer any doubt about coming to embower it with me. Having, for six months together, been running at the ring of pleasure, you will find that repose here which, all young as you are, you ought to want. We will be witty, or classical, or sentimental, as it shall please you best. My milk-maids shall weave you garlands; and every day after coffee I will take you to pay a visit to my nuns. Do not, however, indulge your fancy beyond measure, but rather let me indulge mine, or, at least, let me give you the history of it, and the fair sisterhood who dwell in one of it's visionary corners. Now, what is all this about? you'll say—have a few moments patience, and I will tell you.

You must know then, that, on passing out of my back door, I very soon gain a path, which, after conducting me through several verdant meadows and shady thickets, brings me, in about twenty minutes, to the ruins of a monastery, where, in times long past, a certain number of cloistered females had devoted their—lives—I scarce know what I was going to write—to religious solitude.—This saunter of mine, when I take it, I call *paying a visit to my nuns*.

It is an awful spot—a rivulet flows by it, and a lofty bank, covered with wood, that rises abruptly on the opposite side, gives a gloom to the whole, and forbids the thoughts, if they were ever so disposed, from wandering away from the place. Solitary sanctity never found a nook more appropriated to her nature!—It is a place for an antiquary to sojourn in for a month—and examine with all the spirit of rusty research. But I am no antiquary, as you well know—and, therefore, I come here upon a different and a better errand—that is—to examine myself.

So I lean, lackadaysically, over a gate, and look at the passing stream—and forgive the spleen, the gout, and the envy of a malicious world. And, after having taken a stroll beneath mouldering arches, I summon the sisterhood together, and take the fairest among them, and sit down with her on a stone beneath a bunch of alders—and do—what? you'll say—why I examine her gentle heart, and see how it is attuned; I then guess at her wishes, and play with the cross that hangs at her bosom—in short—I make love to her.

Fie, for shame! Tristram—that is not as it ought to be:—Now I declare, on the contrary, that it is exactly what it ought to be; for, though philosophers may say, among the many other foolish things philosophers have said, that a man who is in love is not in his right senses—I do assert, in opposition to all their saws and see-saws, that he is never in his right senses, or I would rather say his right sentiments, but when he is pursuing some *Dulcinea* or other. If that should be the case with you at this moment, I will forgive your staying from me; but if this

letter should find you at the instant when your last flame is blown out, and before a new one is lighted up, and you should not take post and come to me and my nuns, I will abuse you in their name and my own, to the end of the chapter—though I believe, after all, at the end of the chapter, I should feel myself

affectionately your's,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER II.

*Coxwold, July 17, 1764.*

AND so you have been at the seats of the learned.—If I could have guessed at such an intention, I would have contrived that something in an epistolary shape should have met you there, with half a dozen lines recommending you to the care of the *Master of Jesus*.—He was my tutor when I was at College, and a very good kind of man. He used to let me have my way, when I was under his direction, and that shewed his sense, for I was born to travel out of the common road, and to get aside from the highway path, and he had sense enough to see it, and not to trouble me with trammels. I was neither made to be a *thill-horse*, nor a *fore-horse*; in short I was not made to go in a *team*, but to amble along as I liked; and so that I do not kick, or splash, or run over any one, who in the name of common sense has a right to interrupt me?—Let the good folks laugh if they will, and



much good may it do them. Indeed, I am persuaded, and I think I could prove, nay, and I would do it, if I were writing a book instead of a letter, the truth of what I once told a very great statesman, orator, politician, and as much more as you please—*that every time a man smiles—much more so—when he laughs—it adds something to the fragment of life.*

But the staying five days at Cambridge does not come within the immediate reach of my crazy comprehension, and you might have employed your time much, much better, in urging your mettlesome tits towards Coxwold.

I may suppose that you have been picking a hole in the skirts of Gibb's cumbrous architecture, or measuring the façade of Trinity College Library, or peering about the gothic perfections of King's College Chapel, or, which was doing a better thing, sipping tea and talking sentimentally with the Miss Cookes, or disturbing Mr. Gray with one of your enthusiastic visits—I say *disturbing* him, for with all your own agreeableness, and all your admiration of him, he would rather have your room than your company. But mark me, I do not say this to his glory, but to his shame. For I would be content with any room, so I had your company.

But tell me, I beseech you, what you did with S—— all this time. The looking at the heavy walls of muzzing Colleges, and gazing at the mouldy pictures of their founders, is not altogether in his way; nor did he wander where I have whilom wandered, on Cam's all verdant banks with willows crowned, and call the muse: Alas, he'd rather call a waiter—and how such a milksop as you

could travel—I mean be suffered to travel, two leagues in the same chaise with him, I know not—but from that admirable and kind pliability of spirit which you possess whenever you please, but which you do not always please to possess. I do not mean that a man should wear a court dress when he is going to a puppet-show; but, on the other hand, to keep the best suit of embroidery for those only whom he loves, though there is something noble in it, will never do. The world, my dear friend, will not let it do. For while there are such qualities in the human mind as ingratitude and duplicity, unlimited confidence and this patriotism of friendship, which I have heard you rave and rant about, is a very dangerous business.

I could preach a sermon on the subject—to say the truth, I am got as grave as if I were in my pulpit. Thus are the projects of this life destroyed. When I took up my pen, my humour was gay, frisky, and fanciful—and now I am sliding into all the see-saw gravity of solemn councils. I want nothing but an ass to look over my pales and set up a braying to keep me in countenance.

Leave, leave your Lincolnshire seats and come to my dale; S——, I know, is heartily tired of you. Besides I want a nurse, for I am not quite well, and have taken to milk-coffee. Remember me, however, to him kindly, and to yourself cordially, for

I am, yours, most truly,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER III.

To William Combe, Esq.

*Coxwold, Aug. 5, 1764.*

AND so you sit in S——'s temple and drink tea, and converse classically:—now I should like to know what is the nature of this disorder which you call classicality;—if it consists in a rage to converse on ancient subjects in a modern manner; or on modern subjects in an antient one;—or are you both out of your senses, and do you fancy yourselves with Virgil and Horace at Sinuessa, or with Tully and Atticus at Tusculum? Oh how it would delight me to peep at you from behind a laurel bush, and see you surrounded with columns and covered by a dome, quaffing the extracts of a Chinese weed, and talking of men who boasted the inspiration of the Falerian grape!

What a couple of vapid, inert beings you must be!—I should really give you up for lost, if it were not for the confidence I have in the reinvigorating powers of my society, to which you must now have immediate recourse, if you wish for a restoration. Make haste then, my good friend, and seek the aid of your physician ere it be too late.

You know not the interest I take in your welfare. Have I not ordered all the linen to be taken out of the press, and rewashed before it was dirty, that you may have a

clean table cloth every day, with a napkin into the bargain? And have I not ordered a kind of windmill, that makes my head ach again with its clatter, to be placed in my fine cherry-tree, that the fruit may be preserved from the birds, to furnish you a desert? And do you not know that you will have curds and cream for your supper? Think on these things, and let S—— go to Lincoln sessions by himself, and talk classically with country justices. In the mean time we will philosophize and sentimentalize;—the last word is a bright invention of the moment in which it was written, for yours or Dr. Johnson's service,—and you shall sit in my study and take a peep into the world as into a show-box, and amuse yourself as I present the pictures of it to your imagination. Thus will I teach you to laugh at its follies, to pity its errors, and despise its injustice;—and I will introduce you, among the rest, to some tender-hearted damsel, on whose cheeks some bitter affliction has placed a tear;—and having heard her story, you shall take a white handkerchief from your pocket to wipe the moisture from her eyes, and from your own:—and then you shall go to bed, not to the damsel, but with an heart conscious of those sentiments, and possessed of those feelings, which will give softness to your pillow, sweetness to your slumbers, and gladness to your waking moments.

You shall sit in my porch, and laugh at attic vestibules. I love the classics as well as any man ought to love them,—but among all their fine sayings, their fine writings, and their fine verses, their most enthusiastic admirer would not be able to find me half a dozen stories that have any sentiment in them,—and so much for that.

If you don't come soon, I shall set about another volume of *Tristram* without you. So God bless you, for

I am your's most truly,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER IV.

To William Combe, Esq.

*Coxwold, near Easingwold,  
August 8, 1764.*

I AM grieved for your downfall, though it was only out of a park-chair—May it be the last you will receive in this world; though, while I write this wish, my heart heaves a deep sigh, and I believe it will not be read by you, my friend, without a similar accompaniment.

Alas! alas! my dear boy, you are born with talents to soar aloft with; but you have an heart, which, my apprehensions tell me, will keep you low.—I do not mean, you know I do not, any thing base or grovelling;—but, instead of winging your way above the storm, I am afraid that you will calmly submit to its rigours, and house yourself afterwards in some humble shed, and there live contented, and chaunt away the time, and be lost to the world.

How the wind blows I know not; and I have not an

inclination to walk to my window, where, perhaps, I might catch the course of a cloud and be satisfied,—but here I am up to my knees—I should rather say up to my heart, in a subject, which is ever accompanied with some afflicting vaticination or other. I am not afraid of your doing any wrong but to yourself. A secret knowledge of some circumstances which you have never communicated to me, have alarmed my affection for you—not from any immediate harm they can produce, but from the conviction they have forced upon me, concerning your disposition, and the nicer parts of your character. If you do not come soon to me, I shall take the wings of some fine morning and fly to you; but I should rather have you here; for I wish to have you alone; and if you will let me be a *Mentor* to you for one little month, I will be content—and you shall be a *Mentor* to me the rest of the year; or, if you will, the rest of my days.

I long, most anxiously, my dear friend, to teach you—not to give an opiate to those sensibilities of your nature, which make me love you as I do; nor to check your glowing fancy, that gives such grace to polish'd youth; nor to yield the beverage of the fountain for the nectar of the cask; but to use the world no better, or to please you a very little better, than it deserves.—But think not, I beseech you, that I would introduce my young *Telemachus* to such a foul and squint-eyed piece of pollution as Suspicion. Avaunt to such a base ungenerous passion! I would sooner carry you to *Calypso* at once, and give you at least a little pleasure for your pains. But there is a certain little spot to be found somewhere in the mid-way between trusting every body and trusting nobody; and so well am I acquainted with the longitudes, latitudes,



and bearings of this world of ours, that I could put my finger upon it, and direct you at once to it; and I think I could give you so many good reasons why you should go there, that you would not hesitate to set-off immediately, and I would accompany you thither, and serve as a *Cicerone* to you. I wish therefore much, very much, to talk with you about that and other serious matters.

As for your bodily infirmity, never mind it; you may come here by gentle stages, and without inconvenience; and I will be your surgeon, or your nurse; and warm your verjuice every evening, and bathe your sprain with it, and talk of these things. So tell me, I pray you, the day that I am to meet you at York. In the mean time, and always may a good Providence protect you—It is the sincere wish of

Your affectionate,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER V.

To W. Combe, Esq.

*Wednesday Morning.*

**T**HIS letter will meet you at Hewit's, instead of myself; for I have taken some how or other, and I know not how, a very violent cold, and cannot come; and as I would receive you with my best looks, if possible, as well as my best welcome, I am nursing myself into some sort



of restoration against your arrival; though my cough torments me without mercy, and I am so hoarse at this moment, that I can scarce make myself heard across my table.

This phthisic of mine will sooner or later, and, perhaps, sooner than either I or you, my friend, may think, bear me to my last asylum from a splenetic world. You will say, perhaps, that I am splenetic also in my turn by writing thus *gravely*;—but as I well know this vile cough is the engine which that scare-crow death employs to shatter my poor frame, and bring it to his dominion, how can I be merry or satisfied?—It is true, I love laughing and merry-making, and all that, as well as any soul upon earth; nevertheless, I cannot think of piping and taboring it out of the world, like the figures in *Holbein's dance*. Besides I have been so used to my own way, that I don't like to be put out of it, by being made to cough so villainously as I do, more than half my time. It is most inurbane in him,—by Heaven, it is cowardly in the rascal, to rob me of those spirits, with which I have so often defeated him.

And this is not all,—for I have forty volumes more to write; nay, and have absolutely promised the world to do it; and I have my engagements to you as well as to the world—and to myself as well as to you both; and how shall I keep my word as an author and a gentleman, and what is of more consequence than either—as a friend,—if I cannot shake off this piece of anatomy: Besides, no one can do these things for me but myself; the business is beyond all power of attorney; for if I were to leave fifty executors to my last will and testament, and if they were

to be joined by a regiment of administrators and assigns they could not take up their pens and do as I would do.

But what a wayward fancy mine is!—and with what a seducing pen am I writing—for I am got leagues without number from the idea which danced before me, when I first began this letter. And here I am wrong again:—for what great distance can there be between the grave of my grandfather and my own; and it was to his tomb that I wished to conduct you!

I know full well, that all sprained as your ankle may be, it will be wholly impossible for you to pass through York, without popping your head into its cathedral, and indulging your mind with a few of those reflections which such a building is calculated to inspire. Now, when you are there, tell a verger to conduct you to the tomb of Archbishop Sterne. He is the same whose picture you saw at Cambridge, and which you were pleased to say, bore so strong a resemblance to me. In the marble whole length figure which dignifies the monument, you will find the likeness still stronger: and if I drop in this corner of the world, I should like to be deposited in that corner of the church, and sleep out my last sleep beside my pious ancestor.

He was an excellent prelate and an honest man:—I have not half his virtues, if report speaks true of us both, which, for his sake, I hope it does—and for my own, I hope it does not. Though, to use an expression which dropped from the lips and at the table of a brother *Arch*-prelate of his, and one of his successors, “My ideas are sometimes rather too *disorderly* for a man *in orders*.” In

his Grace's *Concio ad clerum*, I do not find myself a very principal figure, but in his private hours, he is always most cordial to me.

The day after to-morrow, I shall hope to embrace you at my gate; till then, my dear friend, may God bless you —and always.

Your's, most affectionately,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER VI.

To William Combe, Esq.

*Coxwold, Monday Morning.*

I SHALL forgive the tardiness of your passage hither, if it be true, as a still small voice of a York gossip has informed me, that you repose, with your infirm limb, on a sofa, in Mrs. ——'s withdrawing room, and have your coffee and tea handed you by her two daughters, and one of them has charms enough for the three Graces —and that they play on their harpsichord, and, with voices stolen from heaven, sing duets to you, while you, stretched on damask, command, as it were, that little world of beauty and good sense which surrounds you.

You cannot, my good friend, have known the charming people, with whom you are so happy, more than eight and forty hours at most. Now I make this observation, merely to have the pleasure of making another,

which is, that you have learned the art, and a very comfortable one it is, of setting yourself at ease with worthy spirits, when you have the good fortune to meet them. Indeed, I may claim the credit of having taught you the maxim, that life is too short to be long in forming the tender and happy connections of it. 'Tis a miserable waste of time, as well as a very base business, to be looking at each other, as an usurer looks at a security, to find a flaw in it. No:—if you meet a heart worth being admitted into, and you really feel yourself worthy of admission, the matter is arranged in five hours, as well as five years.

Hail, ye gentle sympathies, that can approach two amiable hearts to each other, and chase every discordant idea from an union that nature has designed by the same happy colouring of character that she has given them!—But *lucus a non lucendo*—I have received a kind of *dish dash* sort of letter from Garrick—out of which all my chemistry cannot extract a sympathetic atom. I am glad, however, to have an opportunity of writing a short answer to him, that I may address a long postscript to his *cara sposa*.

I love Garrick on the stage, better than any thing in the world, *except Mrs. Garrick off it*; and if there is any one heart in the world I should like to get a corner of—it would be hers. But I am too great a sinner to do more than approach the portal of so much excellence—there to bend one knee at least, and ejaculate at a distance from the altar.

I have often thought on what this spirit of idolatry,

which is continually bearing me to the feet of some fair image or other, will do with me twenty years hence; and whether, after having had, during my younger days, a damsel to smooth my pillow—I should find one, in my age, to put on my slipper. However, I need not trouble myself or you about these conjectures; for I well know there is not life in me to make the experiment.

This instant brings me a letter from your kind hostess, who is determined not to let you go till I come to fetch you.—To-morrow, by noon, therefore, I shall embrace you, and her—and—the damsels.

I am, most cordially yours,

L. S T E R N E .

LETTER VII.

To ———, Esq.

*Crazy Castle.*

**T**HOUGH I hope and trust you believe that I am not only disposed to laugh with those who laugh, but to weep with those who weep;—yet it is most true, my dear friend, that I could not but smile as I read the account you sent me of your distress and disappointment; and when I gave your letter to *Hall*, for you see I am at *Crazy Castle*, he laughed the tears into his eyes.

Now you must not suppose, nor can you imagine, that either of us trifled with your sufferings, for you know I

love you, and *Hall* says you are a lad of promise; but we were merry at the amiable simplicity of your nature, in wondering that there is ever any villainy in a villainous world; and at the idea, how little a time you were destined to possess that delicious—for I will call it with all its scrapes and duperies, a delicious sentiment. You have just opened the volume of life, and startle to find a blot in the first page; alas! alas! as you proceed, you will find whole pages so blotted and blurred, that you will scarce be able to distinguish the characters. 'Tis a sorry business I must confess, to plant suspicion in a breast that has never known it, and to check the glow of hope which animates the beginning of the journey, by pointing out the interruptions and dangers that will be necessarily encountered in the course of it: But this is the duty of friendship, and arises from the nature of our existence and the state of the world. If, however, after all, you can acquire an useful experience, and be taught to put yourself on your guard, at the expence of a few score guineas, you have made a good bargain:—so be content, and no more of your complainings.

But you will tell me, perhaps, that it is not the matter of the loss, but the manner of it, that you consider as a misfortune: The being treated so ill, and with so much ingratitude, is the business that afflicts you. *Hall*, who is still laughing, bids me tell you for your comfort, that he who *dupes* must be a *rascal*; and he who is duped may be an *honest man*; but he is a *cynic*, and administers his dose in his own way. Now, was I to console you in mine, I should tell you, that gratitude is not so common a virtue in the world as it ought to be, for all our sakes: but ingratitude, my dear friend, is not an offspring of the pres-



ent moment; it seems to have existed from the beginning, and will continue to disgrace the world when we have long been in the valley of Jehosaphat:—nay, you must have read—indeed I know that I have written a sermon upon the subject—that of the lepers who were healed, but *one* returned to give thanks for his restoration. I do not, however, tell you these things that you may find consolation in the miserable habits of mankind, but that you may not suppose yourself worse used than the rest of the world, which is very common with young men like yourself, who feel at every pore, and have not yet had that collision with untoward circumstances which awakens caution, or begets patience.

And so much for you and your miseries, which I doubt not will have been dissipated by the bewitching smiles of some fair damsel or other, before my grave see-saw letter shall reach you. Let me know, I beg of you, your plan of operations for the winter, if you have one. You may, I think—though you may think otherwise—fly from the joys and damps of this ungenial climate, and winter serenely with me in Languedoc; your company would do me good, and mine would do you no harm:—at least I think so; and we shall return to London time enough to peep in at Ranelagh, and look at the birth-day. In short, write to me upon the subject, and direct to me here, for here I am to be during this shooting month of September; so God bless you, and give you patience if you want it.

I remain,

Yours, most cordially,

L. STERNE.



## LETTER VIII.

To William Combe, Esq.

*Coxwold, June 11, 1765.*

SO *Burton*<sup>1</sup> really told you with a grave face, and an apparent mortification, that I had ridiculed my Irish friends at Bath for an hour together, and had made a large company merry at *Lady Lepel's*<sup>2</sup> table during an whole afternoon at their expence. By Heaven's 'tis false as misrepresentation can make it. It is not in my nature, I trust, to be so ungrateful, as I should be, if absent or present, I were to be ungracious to them. That I should make *Burton* look grave, whose countenance is formed to mark the smiles of an amiable and an honest heart, is not within my chapter of possibilities:—I am sure it is not in that of my intentions to say any thing that is inurbane of such a man as he is:—for, in my life, did I never communicate with a gentleman of qualities more winning, and dispositions more generous. He invited me to his house with kindness, and he gave me a truly graceful welcome; for it was with all his heart. He is as much formed to make society pleasant as any one I ever saw; and I wish he were as rich as Cræsus, that he might do all the good an unbounded generosity would lead him to do. I never passed more pleasant hours in my life than with him and his fair countrywomen; and foul befall the man who should let drop a word in dispraise of him or them! —And there is the charming widow *Moor*, where, if I had not a piece of legal meadow of my own, I should re-

<sup>1</sup> The late amiable and excellent Lord Cunningham.

<sup>2</sup> The late Lady Mulgrave.

joice to batten the rest of my days;—and the gentle elegant *Gore*, with her fine form and Grecian face, and whose lot I trust it will be to make some man happy, who knows the value of a tender heart:—Nor shall I forget another widow, the interesting Mrs. Vesey, with her vocal, and fifty other accomplishments.—I abuse them!—it must not be told,—for it is false,—and it should not be believed, for it is unnatural.—It is true I did talk of them, for an hour together, but no sarcasm or unlucky sallies mingled with my speech:—Yes, I did talk of them as they would wish to be talked of,—with smiles on my countenance, praise on my tongue, hilarity in my heart, and the goblet in my hand.—Besides, I am myself of their own country:—My father was a considerable time on duty with his regiment in Ireland; and my mother gave me to the world when she was there, on duty with him. I beg of you, therefore, to make all these good people believe that I have been at least misunderstood, for it is impossible that *Lady Barrymore* could mean to misrepresent me.

Read *Burton* this letter if you have an opportunity, and assure him of my most cordial esteem and respect for him and all his social excellencies: and whisper something kind and gentle for me, as you well know how, to my fair countrywomen; and let not an unmerited prejudice or displeasure against me remain any longer in their tender bosoms.—When you get into disgrace of any kind, be assured that I will do as much for you.

I am here as idle as ease of heart can make me:—I shall wait for you till the beginning of next month; when, if you do not come, I shall proceed to while away the rest

of the summer at *Crazy Castle* and *Scarborough*. In the beginning, the very beginning of October, I mean to arrive in Bond-street with my *Sermons*; and when I have arranged their publication, then—hey go mad for Italy—whither you would do well to accompany me.—In the mean time, however, I hope, and wish to see you here; it will after all, be much better than playing the *Strephon* with phthisical nymphs at the Bristol Fountain. But do as you may—

I am,

Most sincerely your's,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER IX.

To ———.

[*York, July, 1765*].

I DID not answer your letter as you desired me, for at the moment I received it, I really thought all my projects, for some time to come, were *burned* to a *cinder*; or, which is the better expression of the two, had evaporated in smoke;—for, not half an hour before an affrighted messenger, on a breathless horse, had arrived to acquaint me, that the parsonage house at Sutton was on fire, when he came away, and burning like a bundle of faggots; and while I was preparing to set off to see my house, after it was burned down, your letter arrived to console me on my way; for it gave me every assurance that, if I were left without an hole to put my head into, or a rag

to cover my —— body, you would give me a comfortable room in your house, and a clean shirt into the bargain.

In short, by the carelessness of my curate, or his wife, or some one within his gates, I am an house out of pocket—I say, literally, out of pocket; for I must rebuild it at my own costs and charges, or the church of York, who originally gave it me, will do those things, which in good sense ought not to be done; but which the wise-acres who compose it, will tell me they have a right to do. My loss will be upwards of two hundred pounds, with some books, &c. &c.—so that you may now lay aside all your apprehensions about what I shall do with the wealth that my sermons have brought, and are to bring to me.—I told you *then* that some devilish accident or other would provide me with the ends of getting rid of the means; and I had a cross accident in my head at the time, which I did not communicate to you; but it is not that which has fallen out, nor anything like it;—though this may fall out too, for aught I know, and then the fee simple of my sermons will be gone for ever.

Now these sermons of mine, were most of them written in the very house that is burned down, and all of them preached, I fear again and again, in the very church to which it belonged; and they now answer a purpose I never dreamed or thought of; but so it is in this world, and thus are things hinged and hung together—or rather unhinged or unhung; for I have my doubts at present, whether we shall see the dying gladiator next winter. The matter, however, that concerns me most in the business, is the strange unaccountable conduct of my poor unfortunate curate, not in *setting fire* to the house, for I do not accuse him of it, God knows, nor any one else; but in

*setting off* the moment after it happened, and flying like *Paul* to *Tarsus*, through fear of a prosecution from me.

That the man should have formed such an idea of me, as to suppose me capable, if I did not sooth his sorrows, of adding another to their number, wounded me sorely. For, amidst all my errors and follies, I do not believe there is any thing, in the colour or complexion of any part of my life, that would justify the shadow of such an apprehension.—Besides he deprived me of all the comfort I made out to myself from the misfortune; which was, as it pleased Heaven to deprive him of one house, to take him and his wife, and his little one, into another—I mean into that where I lived myself. And he who now reads my heart, and will one day judge me for the secrets of it—he well knows that it did not grow cold within me, on account of the accident, till I was informed that this silly man was a fugitive, from the fear of my wrath.

The family of the Crofts were kind to me beyond measure, as they have always have been. They are a sort of people you would like extremely; and before the summer is past, I hope to present you to them. Though, if I recollect aright, you know the charming damsel of the house already; and the rest of it, though not so young or so fair, are as amiable as she is.—As I cannot leave you in possession of a better subject for your reflection, &c. I shall say adieu, and God bless you.—In a few days you shall hear again from

Your affectionate and faithful

L. STERNE.

I write this from York—where you may write to me.

## LETTER X.

To ———, Esq.

I HAVE received, my dear friend, your kind answer to my letter. And you must know that it was just such an one as I wished to receive from you:—Nay, it was just such an one as I expected you would write to me. I should have been disappointed if it had been in any other form or shape of friendship. But understand me, if you please; I should have been disappointed for your sake, and not for my own: for though I am charmed that you should have made me those unreserved offers of friendship, which are so gracious in you, I am almost as much pleased that my Exchequer is in that state of sufficiency as not to require them.

I have made my bargain for rebuilding my parsonage, and settled all arrangements with all parties concerned, in a manner more to my satisfaction than I could have expected. I was rather in haste to settle this account, that there might be no risque of leaving my wife and Lydia a dilapidation for their fortune: for I have no reason to believe that the \*\*\* of \*\*\* would be more kind to them when friendless and unprotected, than they had been to the husband of the one, and the father of the other, who, when he was a poor Curate, had pride enough to despise their Reverences, and wit enough to make others laugh at them. But may God forgive them, as I do!—Amen.

I wrote to *Hall* an account of my disaster;—and his



answer bid me find out a *conceit* on the occasion, and comfort myself with it. *Tully*, the Orator, the Politician, the Philosopher, the Moralist, the Consul, &c. &c. &c. adopted as he candidly tells us every one, who reads his works, this mode of consolation, when he lost his daughter; and, if we may believe him, with success. Now this same *Tully*, you must know, was like my father; I mean *Mr. Shandy*, of *Shandy Hall*, who was as well pleased with a misfortune that gave him an opportunity of displaying his eloquence, as with a *blessing* that obliged him to hold his tongue. Both these great men were fond of conceits I mean their own; so I will tell you a story of a *Conceit*, not of Cicero's nor my Father's, but of the Lord of *Crazy*.

You must know then, that this same friend of mine, and, I may add, of your's also, in a moment of lazy pride, took it into his head that he would have a town chariot, to save his feet by day, and to carry him to Ranelagh in the evening. For this purpose, after consulting a coach-maker, he had allotted *one hundred and forty pounds*; and he wrote me word of it. On my arrival in town, about three months after this communication, I found a card of invitation from *Lord Spencer* to dine with him on the following Sunday; and I had no sooner read it, than *Hall's* fine crane-neck'd chariot came bounce as it were, upon my recollections; so I sallied forth to ask him how he did, and to borrow his carriage, that I might pay my visit in pomp as well as *Pontificalibus*. I found him at home made a friendly enquiry or two, and told him of the little arrangement I had formed; when he replied with one of his Cynical smiles, that his mortification was in the extreme, for that his chariot was gone post to Scotland. I



stared, and he laughed,—not at me, but at his own *conceit*; and you shall have it, such as it is:

I must inform you then, that at the moment when the coach-maker, was receiving his last instructions, he himself received a letter; which letter acquainted him that his son, who was quartered at *Edinburgh*, had got into a terrible riot there; to get out of the consequences of which, demanded almost the precise sum that had been destined for the chariot. So that the *hundred and forty pounds*, which had been set a part to build a chariot in London, were employed to repair broken windows, broken lamps, and broken heads, in *Edinburgh*; and *Hall* comforted himself with the conceit that his chariot was gone *post* to *Scotland*. So much for comforts and conceits;—and happy is it for us when we can, by any means, *conceit* ourselves into comfort. I could say more upon this matter, but my paper is almost filled; and I have only space to express a wish, that your life may never want any of these petty helps to make it as happy as, if I greatly mistake not, it must be honourable—Let me see you soon; and, in the mean time, and at all times, may God be with you.

Your's most affectionately,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XI.

To ———, Esq.

*Coxwold, near Easingwold.*

YOU are not singular in your opinion about my wonderful capacity for poetry.—*Beauclerk*, and *Lock*, and I think *Langton*, have said what you have said on the subject, and founded their opinion, as you have done, on the fragment of an Introduction to the Ode to *Julia*, in *Tristram Shandy*. The unity of the episode would have been wounded, if I had added another line; and if I had added a dozen, my character as a poetical genius, which, by the bye, I never had, would have been lost for ever—or rather would never have been suspected.

*Hall* had also similar ideas on this very matter, and, on the strength of his opinion, ventured once to give me an unfinished poem of his own, and bade me go on with it—and so I did, heltering and skeltering at a most terrible rate;—In short, I added some sixty or fourscore lines to the business, which he called doggrel, and which I think he called rightly; however, he chose to let them stand, to use his own phrase, as a curiosity; so into the press they went, and helped to compose the worst squib our crazy friend ever let off. I do not, however, mention these things to lessen the merit of your opinion, by pointing out its similarity to that of others. You need not be ashamed to think with such men, if even they should be wrong, which, on this particular subject, I most solemnly believe you all to be. *Cum his errare* is something—and all that——

I once, it is true, wrote an epitaph, which I liked myself, but the person, at whose request I did it, sacrificed it to one of his own, which he liked better, but which I did not—so my lines were thrown aside, and his own nerveless rhyme was engraved on a marble, which deserved a better inscription; for it covered the dust of one, whose gentle nature, and amiable qualities, merited more than common praise, or common-place eulogium. However, I shed a tear over the sepulchre, which, if the dead could have known it, would have been more acceptable than the most splendid diction that ever glared on monumental alabaster.

I also wrote a kind of Shandean, sing-song, dramatic piece of rhyme for Mr. *Beard*—and he sung it at Ranelagh, as well as on his own stage, for the benefit of some one or other. He asked for something of the kind, and I knew not how to refuse him; for, a year before, he had in a very respectful manner, and without any previous acquaintance, presented me with the freedom of Covent-Garden Theatre. The act was gracious; and I liked it the better, because the monarch of Drury-Lane had known me for some years, and besides had, for some time, occupied a front seat in my page, before he offered me the freedom—not of Drury-Lane house, but of Drury-Lane pit. I told him, on the occasion, that he acted great things and *did* little ones:—so he stammered and looked foolish and performed, at length, with a bad grace, what his rival manager was so kind as to do with the best grace in the world—But no more of that—he is so complete on the stage, that I ought not to mention his patch-work off it.

However, to return to my subject—if I can; for di-

gression is interwoven with my nature; and to get to my point, or find my way back to it, when I have wandered aside, as other men do, is not in the line of my faculties.— But though I may not be a poet, the clerk of my parish is—not absolutely in my conceit—but, which is better, in that of his neighbours; and, which is the best of all—in his own. His muse is a professional one, for she only inspires him to indite hymns; and it is appropriate, for she leads him to such subjects as are suitable to his spiritual office, and which, like those of his brethren *Sternhold* and *Hopkins*, may be said or sung in churches. In short, there had been a terrible disease among the cattle, and our parish had suffered greatly, so that this parochial bard thought it a proper subject for a spiritual song, which he accordingly composed; and gave it out on the Sunday following, to the praise and glory of God, as an hymn of his own composing. Not only the murrain itself, but the sufferers by the calamity, were vociferated through the aisles in all the pomp and devotion of rustic psalmody. The last stanza, which is the only one I recollect, rather unhinged my devotion, but it seemed to rivet that of the congregation, and therefore I had no right to complain. I leave it with you as a *bonne bouche*, and wish you a good night.

Here's Jemmy How has lost a cow,  
And so has Johnny Bland;  
Therefore we'll put our trust in God,  
And not in any other man.

Yours,

L. S.

LETTER XII.

To ———, Esq.

*Coxwold, Wednesday Night.*

I SENT you, my dear friend, as you request it, the Epitaph which I mentioned in my last epistle to you. I write it from recollection; and, though it may not contain the precise expression, it will certainly possess the sentiment of the original composition—and that is of the most consequence. I remember well it came from the heart, for I most sincerely loved the amiable person, whose virtues deserved a better inscription, and, according to a very common course of things, found a worse. But here it is—

Columns and labour'd urns but vainly show,  
An idle scene of fabricated woe:—  
The sweet companion and the friend sincere  
Need no mechanic arts to force the tear,  
In heartfelt numbers, never meant to shine,  
'Twill flow eternal o'er an hearse like thine.  
'Twill flow while gentle goodness has one friend,  
Or kindred tempers have a tear to lend.

*Hall* liked it, I remember—and *Hall* always knows what ought to be liked, and, in certain humours, will be candid upon these sentimental subjects, and acknowledge that he feels them. He is an excellent scholar and a good critic: but his judgment has more severity than it

ought to have, and his taste less delicacy than it should possess. He has, also, great humanity, but, somehow or other, there is so often such a mixture of sarcasm in it, that there are many who will not believe he has a single scruple of it in his composition.—Nay, I am acquainted with several, who cannot be persuaded but that he is a very insensible, hard-hearted man, which I, who have known him long, and known him well, assure you he is not.—He may not always possess the grace of charity, but he feels the reality of it, and continually performs benevolent actions, though not always, I must confess, in a benevolent manner. And here is the grief of the business. He will do a kindness with a sneer, or a joke, or a smile; when, perhaps, a tear, or a grave countenance, at least, would better become him. But this is his way; it is the language of his character; and, though one might wish it to be otherwise, yet I cannot tell what right any of us have to pass a severe sentence upon it, for no other reason in the world, but because our own failings are of a different complexion. And so much for all that.

I am preparing to prance it for a week or ten days at *Scarborough*. If you pass your autumn at *Mulgrave-Hall*, take that place in your way, and I will accompany you on your visit, and then to *Crazy Castle*, and so home: and then to London—and then God knows where—but it shall be where it pleases him: this is *clerically* said, however, and it would be well for the best of us, if it were thought and considered as often as it was said. But so it is, that the lips and the heart, which ought never to be asunder, are sometimes wandering at different corners of the earth. Mine however, are in the closest conjunction,



when I offer you my most affectionate regard. So good night, and may the visions of a good spirit attend you.

Most truly your's

L. [S T E R N E .

LETTER XIII.

To ———, Esq.

*Scarborough.*

I SHALL not reply, my dear friend, to all the kind things you think and say of me.—I trust, indeed, that I deserve some of them; and I am well pleased to find that you think I deserve them all.—But however that may be, I desire you to cherish those benevolent sentiments which you have so warmly expressed in the paper before me, both for your own sake, and that of the person who is the subject of them.

Your commands, in general, should be obeyed without reflection—but in this particular instance, a rare gleam of prudence has shot across me, and, I beg leave to reflect for a few moments on the subject—and were I to take wisdom upon me, and reflect for a few days—the result, I am sure, would be, that I should not obey your commands at all.

The giving advice, my good friend, is the most thankless generosity in the world—because in the first place, it



costs you nothing; and, in the next, it is just such a thing as the person to whom you present it will think that he does not want. This, you see, is my way of reasoning; but I believe, from my heart, that it will apply too well to the subject between us.

There are such things in the world as *wrong heads* and *right hearts*—and *wrong hearts* and *right heads*.——Now, for myself, and speaking under the influence of my own particular feelings, I would rather be of the *right heart* family, with all their blunders, errors and confusions; but if I want a business to be done, or a plan to be executed, give me the *right head*:—if there is a *right heart* into the bargain, so much the better: but it is upon the *former* that I must rely—and whether the latter be right or wrong, is not a matter of absolute consideration. This is not, my dear friend, quite orthodox, according to your system, but as you proceed, every day will tend to increase the propinquity of this opinion to your own.

Now, I am rather disposed to think, without leaning to the uncharitable side of the question, that poor ——— is of the *Wrong-head* family.—I know his heart—and I am sure his present scrape arises from the good dispositions of it. Nevertheless, though I think myself a dab at giving good counsel in such cases as his, I cannot bring myself to prescribe on the occasion.—It is impossible to do it, without informing him of the nature of his disease, which is neither more nor less than absolute wrong-headedness; and, were I to do it, he would exhibit another symptom of his disorder, by throwing my prescription out of the window, and perhaps threatening the same mischief to the physician himself.

If you have influence sufficient to induce him to apply to me, I will most readily exert my best for him; and I can then do the bitter business, and give the unpalatable dose with a good grace. Here then we will, if you please, let the matter rest for the present.

I write in haste, and on my pillow, that you may, as soon as possible, be acquainted with my sentiments in a matter wherein you have a greater dependence upon me than I fear the event will justify.—So good morning, and God bless you.——

I received a letter, yesterday, from poor dear Lydia.—It is an amiable madcap—and God bless her also.—Once more adieu.

Yours, &c.

L. STERNE.

#### LETTER XIV.

*Scarborough, Aug. 29, 1765.*

YOU refine too much, my dear friend,—you do indeed.—Your reasoning is ingenious, and produces a neat, pretty, plausible train of argument, that would make a figure in a company of female philosophers; but if committed to paper, would be pardonable only when written on the fan of some *pedantic Dulcinea*. You run into divisions, when a simple modulation would answer better; that is, would produce more pleasing effects both

in yourself, and the sentimental spirit whom you might wish to please.

Opinion, my dear fellow, somehow or other, rules all mankind; and not like a kind master, or, which would be more congenial, a gentle mistress, but like a tyrant, whose wish is power, and whose gratification is servility. —Opinion leads us by the ears, the eyes,—and, I had almost said, by the *nose*. It warps our understandings, confounds our judgments, dissipates experience and turns our passions to its purpose. In short, it becomes the governess of our lives, and usurps the place of reason, which it has kicked out of office.—This is among the strange truths which cannot be explained but by that mortifying description which time will display to your experience hereafter, with ten times the credit that would accompany any present endeavours of mine to the same purpose.

If you would know more of the matter and can bring yourself to risque the opinion, which, by the bye, I do not advise you to do, ask A—— why he submits, with such a placid subservience, to the little wench who lives with him? You know—and all his friends know—that he has but half, nay not half the enjoyments of life, through the fear of her vengeance, whatever it may be. He has fortune, understanding, and courage:—he loves society, and adds greatly to the pleasures of it,—and yet, how often does he leave it half-enjoyed! Nay, to come more home to the business, how often has he left our pleasant classical meetings, before they have arisen to their usual glow, in order to humour this little piece of disgrace, whom he has not the resolution to send back to the banks

of the Wye, where the fifty pounds a year he might give her, would make her queen of the village!—We pity poor A——, we argue with him, we wonder at him—do we not?—But in this we deceive ourselves,—for the wisest and best of us are governed by some little dirty drab of an opinion, whose governance is equally disgraceful, and may be much more injurious—as it will, perhaps, give a colour to the whole current of our lives. A mistress, with all her arts and fascinations, may, in time, be got rid of; but opinion, once rooted, becomes a part of ourselves—it lives and dies with us.

It must be acknowledged, that I have been rather sermonic this fine morning, but you know how and where to apply what has been written, and I leave the whole to your practice, if you think proper; and if you do not—but what have I to do with *ifs*?—It is an exceptionable monosyllable, and I fling it from me.

B——is here, and tells me that he left you continually driving between London and Richmond—What beauty of the Hill has enchanted you there? Or what swan of the silver Thames are you dying for?—I take it very ill of you that you never favour me with a single communication concerning your *Dorothies* or your *Delias*: I protest most seriously that I will never write to you again, till you give me an history of your chains; and who it is has bound you at present on the river's bank—tell me who the Naiad is.

Mr. F——, the Apostolic F——, as Lady —— calls him, in his way to ——, hinted to me something serious. He talked of a marriage,—to which I replied, God for-

bid!—But do not, I pray, be angry with my exclamation; for it was neither a thoughtless, or a peevish one, but an impulse of that sincere regard which you more than deserve from me.—With your dispositions, and in your situation, I hardly think there is a woman in the kingdom who would be an happy match for you: and if you think proper to ask me, I will, hereafter, tell you why:—at present I shall content myself with telling you that

I am,

most cordially your's,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XV.

*September 9, 1765.*

**I** MEAN my dear friend, that this epistle should meet you, and greet you, a day or two at least before you leave town; and I wish it, from that spirit of miserable self-interest, which you know governs and directs me in all I do.—But, lest you should not like this reason, I will give you another, and which may be nearer the truth; at least I hope so.

I want very much to know whether Becket has arranged the matter with *Foley* the banker, at *Paris*, about Mrs. Sterne's remittance, as I ordered him. You must know that I suspect he has been dilatory, not from dishonesty, for I believe him to be as honest a poor creature

as was ever vamped into the form he wears : but, perhaps, his exchequer might not be in a convenient state to answer my orders ; and if so, I only beg to be informed of the truth ; which, as he does not answer my letters, he appears to be afraid to tell.

I have received a letter from *Toulouse* which does not comfort my spirits ; and I have reason to apprehend from thence, that there is some neglect at the fountain head of my treasury, which I must beg you to enquire into ; and, if you see occasion, to correct, in order that the little rill of ways and means may not be interrupted between *London* and *Languedoc*—that is, between me and Mrs. Sterne, and my poor dear Lydia.

They write me word that they have drawn upon *Foley*, as I desired, who tells them he has no effects to answer the bill ; but that, if they are in distress, he will accommodate them for my sake. This is very handsome dealing, and I am rather proud of it ;—but, in the mean time, there is an uncertainty which is very unpleasant—I mean to the poor women, who are at such a distance, that a great deal of anxious suspense must be suffered before the mistake can be rectified.

Besides, —, these things breed words, and questions, as well as suspicions, and all that.—My dear Lydia contents herself with a gentle complaint or so ; but her mother does not hesitate to discharge a volume of reproaches. Now the truth is, that I deserve neither the one nor the other,—and had managed the matter for the supply of their wants, and the ridding myself of all future anxiety in the business, in as plain a manner as my hand-



writing and spirit of calculation could make it.—However, it has abated the ardour of my Knight Errantry for the present, and thrown more than a sickly thought or two on my imagination.

I am prodigal of words, my dear friend, in a matter wherein a mere hint is all that would be necessary for you to exert yourself. So do me the honour to see that it is absolutely done without a moment's delay; and if Becket should hesitate the tythe of an instant,—do that for me, my friend, which I would do for you on a similar occasion.—So God bless you.—My heart will not suffer me to offer you an apology, because I know it will be ungracious to your's.—Once more farewell!

Most cordially your's,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XVI.

To ———, *Esq.*

*Coxwold, Wednesday Evening.*

I HAVE received the Letter which you informed me I should receive from Doctor L——, and return you both my best thanks for it.—He is certainly a man of Learning and an excellent Critic, and would do well to employ his leisure hours on *Virgil*; or rather, if I understand him well, on *Horace*; and he would give us such a Commentary on both those Authors as we have not, and perhaps, may never have, if he does not set about it.



But *Tristram Shandy*, my friend, was made and formed to baffle all criticism:—and I will venture to rest the book on this ground,—that it is either above the power or beneath the attention of any critic or hypercritic whatsoever.—I did not fashion it according to any rule.—I left my fancy, or my Genius, or my feelings,—call it what you may,—to its own free course, without a single intruding reflection, that there ever had been such a man as *Aristotle* in the world.

When I mounted my Hobby Horse, I never thought, or pretended to think where I was going, or whether I should return home to dinner or supper, the next day, or the next week:—I let him take his own course; and amble, or curvet, or trot, or go a sober, sorrowful Lackadaysical pace as it pleased him best.—It was all one to me, for my temper was ever in unison with his manner of coursing it,—be it what it might. I never pricked him with a spur, or struck him with a whip; but let the rein lay loosely on his neck, and he was wont to take his way without doing injury to any one.

Some would laugh at us as we passed along,—and some seemed to pity us—and now and then a melancholy tender hearted passenger would look at us and heave a sigh.—Thus have we travelled together—but my poor *Rosinante* did not, like *Balaam's Ass*, stand still if he saw an *Angel* in the way, but directly pushed up to her;—and if it were but a damsel, sitting by a fountain, who would let me take a refreshing draught from her cup, she was, surely an *Angel* to me.

The grand Error of Life is, that we look too far:—We

scale the Heavens,—we dig down to the centre of the Earth, for Systems,—and we forget ourselves.—Truth lies before us; it is in the high way path; and the Ploughman treads on it with his clouted Shoon.

Nature defies the rule and the Line;—Art raises its structures, and forms its works on their aid:—but Nature has her own Laws, which Art cannot always comprehend, and Criticism can never reach.

DoCTOR L—— acknowledges, however, that my *Sermons on Conscience* is a most admirable composition; but is of opinion that it is degraded by being made a part of *Tristram Shandy*—Now, if you please; be so good as to note my answer:—If this sermon is so excellent, and I myself believe it to be so,—because *Judge Burnet*, who was a man of taste and erudition, as well as Law, desired me to print it;—I say, if it be a good Sermon, it ought to be read; and since it appeared in the pages of *Tristram Shandy*, it has been read by thousands; whereas the fact is, that when it was published by itself, it was read by no one.

I have answered DoCTOR L—— with all the respect which his amiable Character and admirable Talents deserve; but I have told him, at the same time, that my book was not written to be tried by any known Laws of Scholastic Criticism; and that if I thought any thing I might hereafter write would be within their reach, I would throw the Manuscript that is now before me into the fire, and never dip my pen into my Ink-stand again, but for the purpose of assuring some uncritical, and uncriticising friend, like yourself, of my sincere and cordial

regard.—At this moment I make that offering to you,—  
So God be with you.

L. S.

I begin to peep out of my hermitage a little; for Lord and Lady Fauconberg are come down, and bring with them, as usual, a large store of amiable, easy, and hospitable virtues.—I wish you were here to partake of, and add to them.

## LETTER XVII.

To ——— *Esq.*

*Monday Evening.*

**Y**OU have hit my fancy most wonderfully, in the account you have given me of Lady ———; the Juno character not only prevails, but absolutely predominates. The *Minerva* qualities are all secondary,—and as to any *Cyprian* dispositions, I know nothing about them.

She certainly possesses a very good understanding, and is not without attainments; but both the one and the other derive all their consequence from her manners.—She has somewhat of an imperious disposition, which would be either silently despised by some, or violently opposed by others, if she did not give a grace to it that annihilates any unpleasant sensation that might attempt to rise in the breast of a by-stander, or which is better, by-sitter: but this is not all, for it calls forth also, that kind

of respectful submission, which does not lessen us in our own opinion for having practised it.

I never, in my life, felt the merit of exterior decoration so much as in my conversations and communications with this Lady; and I really do not know any position, in the present school of fashion, where a young man might learn so much as in her drawing room, or without meaning any mischievous equivoque, her dressing room.—It is really no common satisfaction to me to reflect that my young friend is an *Elève* of such an instructress.

There is a time and circumstance of life, and that period and circumstance are now yours, when nothing but the easy, society, and little tender friendships of an accomplished woman are wanting to render a character complete:—and without saying a word more than I think on the business,—I cannot but express my satisfaction that you are in such hands as will probably produce the very effects which so sincere a friend as myself can wish and desire.

It has ever been a maxim with me, since I knew any thing of the world, that we are all of us as much in want of a Schoolmistress at the finish, as we do at the commencement of our education. And as you are so fortunate as to have Lady ——— to teach you the *Horn-book* of high life, you will bid fair to spell it and put it together, so as to become the charm of all society:—and you will lose, what I so much wish you to lose, the attention to one, and the neglect of the many; which though there may be something amiable in the principle, is not adapted to the general intercourse of life.

Lady M—— F—— might forward business, and Lady C—— I am sure is ready to do it—so that in such a soil, in such a season, and with such cultivations, what has not partial friendship a right to expect. And now what can I do better than leave you in such good and excellent company, and desire you, in return to present my respectful compliments to them all,—and to receive yourself the most cordial regard of

your very sincere

and affectionate

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XVIII.

To ——

*Coxwold, Wednesday Noon.*

I UNDERSTAND, from Mr. Phipps,<sup>1</sup> that you are absolutely engaged to pass the Summer, or rather the Autumn, with him at *Mulgrave-Hall*; so that I now consider a previous visit to me as a matter on which I may depend, and to which believe me, I look with real satisfaction. We will while away a month or six weeks at my vicarage in a manner which, I trust, will not be unpleasing or unprofitable to you.

However, in saying this, or rather writing it, I address myself to the excellence of your heart, which I cannot enough admire, and that cultivated understanding of

<sup>1</sup> The Late *Lord Mulgrave*.

which I have the greatest hopes.—I know the pleasures you will quit, and the societies you must sacrifice, to come and pass any part of the Summer with me; but, at the same time, I do not doubt of your visit,—and that a Shandean *Tête à Tête* has its charms for you.

I remember a circumstance, which I shall never think of without the utmost pride in my own heart, and the most sincere affection for yours;—but, besides that it flattered me in the highest degree, it proved that you possessed a source of sentiment which, whatever may befall you in life, must preserve you in honour and happiness:—with such a delicious quality, misfortune will never be able to bear you down; nor will folly, passion, or even vice, though they may for a time obscure or lessen the excellence of your character, possess the power of destroying it.—I allude to a little delicate touch of sentiment that escaped you last winter,—which though I have mentioned it with every possible eulogium to others, again and again, I have never before hinted it even to you; the moment, however, is now come, when my spirit urges me to speak of it; and I do it with those dispositions which are congenial to the subject, and, I trust, natural to myself.

You cannot absolutely have forgotten an evening visit which you paid me last January, in Bond Street, when I was ill in bed;—nor ought it to escape your occasional reflection that you sat by my bed-side the whole night, performing every act of the most friendly and pious attention.—I then thought that the scare-crow death was at my heels;—nay, I thought the villain had got me by the throat,—and I told you as much.—However, it



pleased Heaven, that I should not be snatched from the world at that moment; though I spoke my own honest opinion when I vaticinated my destiny by expressing little hopes of getting to the winter's end——I believe, my dear friend, said I, that I shall soon be off.—I hope not, you replied, with a squeeze of my hand and a sigh of your heart, which went to the very bottom of mine:—but,—you were pleased to add lest that should be the case, I hope you will do me the favour to let me be always with you, that I may have every atom of advantage and comfort your society may afford me, while Heaven permits it to last.—

I spoke no reply, for I could not,—but my heart made one then, and will continue to do so,—till it is become *a clod of the Valley*.

Hence it is, that I do not doubt but you will quit the ring of pleasure without regret, to come and sit with me beneath my Honey-Suckle, which is now flaunting like a Ranelagh beauty, and accompany me in paying my nuns their pensive evening visit.—We can go to vespers with them, and return home to our curds and cream with more delicious sentiments than all the pleasures of the world, and the beauties thereof, in their vainest moments can truly afford.

I am busy about another couple of volumes to amuse, and, as I hope, to instruct a gouty and a splenetic world;—in which, I solemnly declare, I have no Ambition to remain, but for the love I bear to such friends as you; and, perhaps, the vanity, which I am vain enough not to call an idle one, of adding a few more leaves to the wreath which I have been able to weave for my own little glory.



Come, then, and let me read the pages to you as they fall from my pen; and be a *Mentor* to *Tristram*, as you have been to *Yorick*.—At all events,—I am sure you cannot come to York without coming to me; and I shall triumph completely over *Lady Lepel*, &c. if I draw you for a month from the bright centre to which you are so naturally attracted. So God bless you,—and believe me, with all sincerity, to be,

Most affectionately your's,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XIX.

To ———

*Bishopsthorp, Thursday night.*

**I** SAW the charming *Mrs. Vesey* but for a moment, and she contrived with her voice and her thousand other graces to *dis—order* me; and what she will have to answer for on the occasion, I shall not employ my casuistry to determine;—nor shall I ask my good friend the Archbishop, from whose house, and amidst whose kindness and hospitality I address this to you.

I envy, however, your saunter together round an *empty Ranelagh*, though I should have liked it the better, because it was empty, and would give the imagination and every delicious feeling, opportunity to make one forget there was another being in the room—but ourselves.

You will, I am sure, more than understand me when I mention that sense of female perfection,—I mean, however, when the female is sitting or walking beside you,—which so possesses the mind that the whole Globe seems to be occupied by none but you two.—When your hearts, in perfect unison, or, I should rather say, harmony with each other, produce the same chords,—and blossom with the same flowers of thought and sentiment.

These hours,—which virtuous, tender minds have the power of separating from the melancholy seasons of life,—make ample amends for the weight of cares and disappointments, which the happiest of us are doomed to bear.—They cast the brightest sunshine on the dreary landscape,—and form a kind of refuge from the stormy wind and tempest.

With such a companion, is not the primrose bank and the cottage, which humble virtue has raised on its side, superior to all that splendour and wealth has formed in the palaces of monarchs—The scented heath is then the *perfumed Araby*, and, though the Nightingale should refuse to lodge among the branches of the poor solitary tree that overshadows us,—if my fair minstrel did but pour forth the melting strain, I would not look to the musick of the spheres for ravishment.

There is something, my dear friend, most wonderfully pleasant in the idea of getting away from the world;—and though I have ever found it a great comfort, yet I have been more vain of the business, when I have done it in the midst of the world.—But this *aberration* from the crowd, while you are surrounded and pressed by it, is only to be accomplished by the magic of female perfec-

tion.—Friendship, with all its powers,—mere friendship, cannot do it.—A more refined sentiment must employ its influence to wrap the heart in this delicious oblivion.—It is too pleasing to last long,—for envious, sleepless care is ever on the watch to awake us from the bewitching trance.

You, my friend, possess something of the reality of it: and I, while I enjoy your happiness, apply to fancy for the purpose of creating a copy of it.—So I sit myself down upon the turf, and place a lovely fair one by my side,—as lovely, if possible, as Mrs. Vesey, and having plucked a sprig of blossoms from the May-bush, I place it in her bosom, and then address some tender tale to her heart,—and if she weeps at my story, I take the white handkerchief she holds in her hand and wipe the tears from off her cheek: and then I dry my own with it:—and thus the delightful vision gives wing to a lazy hour, calms my spirits, and composes me for my pillow.

To wish that care may never plant a thorn upon yours, would be an idle employment of votive regard;—but that you may preserve the virtue which will blunt their points, and continue to possess the feelings which will, sometimes, pluck them away, is a wish not unworthy of that friendship, with which

I am,

your most affectionate,

L. STERNE.

P. S. Lydia writes me word she has got a lover.—Poor dear Girl!—

LETTER XX.

To ———.

*Sunday Evening.*

**D**O not imagine, my dear Boy—and do not suffer, I beseech you any pedantic, cold-hearted fellow to persuade you—that *sensibility is an evil*. You may take my word on this subject, as you have been pleased to do on many others—that sensibility is one of the first blessings of life—as well as the brightest ornament of the human character.

You do not explain matters to me, which, by the bye, is not fair; but I suppose, from the tenor of your letter, which is now beside me, that you have been made a dupe of by some artful person—who, I am disposed to think, is some *cunning baggage*—and that, under the impressions of this game that has been played you, your vanity is alarmed, and your understanding piqued; and then, you lay all this dire grievance, in a very pettish manner, let me tell you, at the door of your sensibility. And, which is worse than all the rest, you write to me as if you really believed yourself to be in earnest, in all the see-saw observations you have written to me on the subject.

Be assured, my dear friend, if I thought the sentiments of your last letter were not the sentiments of a sickly moment—if I could be made to believe, for an instant, that they proceeded from you, in a sober, reflecting condition of your mind—I should give you over

as incurable, and banish all my hopes of your rising into that proud honour, and brilliant reputation, which, I trust, you will one day possess.

I was almost going to write—and wherefore should I not—that there is an amiable kind of *cullibility*, which is as superior to the slow precaution of worldly wisdom, as the sound of *Abel's Viol di Gamba*, to the braying of an ass on the other side of my paling.

If I should, at any time, hear a man pique himself upon never having been a dupe—I should grievously suspect that such an one will, some time or other, give cause to be thought, at best, a mean-spirited, dirty rascal.

You may think this a strange doctrine—but, be that as it may—I am not ashamed to adopt it.—What would you say of any character, who had neither humanity, generosity, nor confidence?—Why you would say—I know you would—such a man

Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils——

And yet imposition—dupery—deception—call it by what name you will—attends upon these virtues like their shadow. For virtue, my dear friend, like every other possession in this world, though it is the most valuable of all—is of a mixed nature; and the very inconveniences of it, if they deserve that name, form the basis on which its importance and natural excellence is established.

Sensibility is oftentimes betrayed into a foolish thing;—but its folly is amiable, and some one or other is the

better for it, I am not for its excesses—or a blind submission to its impulse, which produces them;—yet, some how or other, I should be strongly disposed to hug the being, who would take the rag off his back—to place it on the shivering wretch who had nought to cover him.

*Discretion* is a cold quality—but I have no objection to the possessing as much of it—as will direct your finer feelings to their proper objects;—but here let its office finish; if it proceeds a step further there may be mischief;—it may cool that current which is the life-blood of all virtue, and will, I trust, warm your heart, till it is become a clod of the valley.

Sensibility is the source of those delicious feelings which give a brighter colour to our joys, and turn our tears to rapture.—Though it may, now and then, lead us into a scrape, as we pass through life—you may be assured, my dear friend, it will get us out of them all, *at the end of it*;—and that is a matter which wiser men than myself will tell you is well worth thinking about.

So leaving you to your contemplations—and wishing them, and every thing you do, an happy issue—I remain with great truth,

your affectionate,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XXI.

To ———.

*Bond Street, Thursday Morning.*

SO, my dear friend, you are pleased to be very angry with the *Reviewers*;—so am not I.—But as your displeasure proceeds from your regard for me,—I thank you, as I ought to do,—again and again.

I really do not know to whom I am personally indebted for so much obliging illiberality.—Nor can I tell whether it is the society at large, or a splenetic individual, to whom I am to acknowledge my obligation.—I have never enquired who it is, or who they are:—and if I knew him or them,—what would it signify?—and wherefore should I give their names immortality in my writings, which they will never find in their own.——Let the Asses bray as they like;—I shall treat their worships as they deserve, in my own way and manner,—and in a way and manner that they will like less than any other.

There is a certain race of people, who are ever aiming to treat their betters in some scurvy way or other—but it has ever been a practice with me, not to mind a little dirt thrown upon my coat,—so that I keep my *lining unrumpled*.——And so much for that envy, ignorance and ill-nature, for which, what I have written, is far too much.

I am rejoiced, however, for twenty good reasons,



which I will tell you hereafter, that London lies in your way between Oxfordshire and Suffolk, and one of them I will tell you now—which is, that you can be of very great service to me; so I would desire you to prepare yourself to do me a kindness; if I did not know that you are always in such a state of preparation.

The town is so empty, that though I have been in it, full four and twenty hours, I have seen only three people I know—Foote on the stage—Sir Charles Danvers at St. James's Coffee-house, and Williams, who was an hasty bird of passage, on his flight to Brighthelmstone, where I am told he is making love in right earnest, to a very fine woman, and with all the success his friends can wish him. Our races at York were every thing we could desire them to be in the ball-room, and every thing we did not desire them to be on the ground. The rain said nay, with a vengeance, to the sports of the course, for all the water-spouts of the heavens seemed to be let loose upon it. However in the amusements *under cover*, we were all as merry as heart could wish. I had promised a certain person that you should be there, and was obliged to parry a score or two of reproaches on your account.

But though I forgot to tell it you before, I am by no means well, and if I do not get away from this climate before winter sets in, I shall never see another spring in this world; and it is to forward my journey to the South, that I request you to make haste to me from the West.

Alas, alas, my friend! I begin to feel that I lose strength in these annual struggles and encounters with that miserable scare-crow, who knows as well as I do,

that, do what I can he will finally get the better of me, and all of us. Indeed, he has already beat the vizard from my helmet, and the point of my spear is not as it was wont to be. But while it pleases heaven to grant me life, it will, I trust, grant me spirits to bear up against the sawey circumstances of it, and preserve to my last separating sigh, that sensibility to whatever is kind and gracious, which, when once it possesses the heart, makes, I trust, ample amends for a large portion of human error.

You may, indeed, believe, that while I am sensible of any thing, I shall be sensible of your friendship; and I have every reason to think, that should my term be drawing nigh to its period, you will continue to love me while I live, and when I am no more, to cherish the memory of

Your ever faithful

and affectionate

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XXII.

To ———

*Sunday Morning.*

**I**F you wish to have the representation of my spare, meagre-form—which, by the bye, is not worth the canvas it must be painted on—you shall be most welcome to it; and I am happy in the reflection, that when my bones

shall be laid low, there may be any resemblance of me, which may recall my image to your friendly and sympathizing recollection.

But you must mention the business to *Reynolds* yourself; for I will tell you why I cannot. He has already painted a very excellent portrait of me, which, when I went to pay him for, he desired me to accept, as a tribute, to use his own elegant and flattering expression, that his heart wished to pay to my genius. That man's way of thinking and manners, are at least equal to his pencil.

You see therefore the delicacy of my situation, as well as the necessity, if the genius of *Reynolds* is to be employed in the business, of your taking it entirely upon yourself. Or if your friendly impatience which you express with so much kindness, will let you wait till we make our tour to *Bath*, your favorite *Gainsborough* may do the deed.

Or why not your little friend *Cosway*, who is rising fast into fame and fortune. But be it as you please, and arrange it according to your own fancy.

At all events, I shall treat myself when I get to Rome with my own busto, if *Nollikens* does not make a demand for it that may be inconsistent with my Exchequer. The statuary decorations of my grandfather the Archbishop's monument, in the Cathedral at York, which you admire so much, have given birth, I believe, to this whim of mine; and this piece of marble, which my vanity—for let it be vanity if you please—destines for myself, may be placed by the hand of friendship, and by yours perhaps, near my grave—and so much for that.

But I was born for digressions, and I, therefore, tell you at once, not rashly, or prematurely, but with all due sobriety and reflection, that Lord —— is of a low, base, pimping nature. If he had been nothing but a fool, I should have said—Have mercy upon him: but he has just understanding sufficient to make him answerable for what he does, and not sufficient to perceive the superiority of what is great over what is little.—If ever that man rises into a good or a noble action, I would be bound to be considered as a retailer of scandal, and an ill-natured man, as long as I live, and as long as my memory lives; but no more of him I beseech you—and the hour tells me to write no more of any thing, for I must hasten where I ought to have been half an hour ago—so God bless you, and believe me, where ever I am, to be

Most cordially yours,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XXIII.

To —— —

*Monday Morning.*

THE story, my dear friend, which you heard related, with such an air of authority, is like many other true stories, absolutely false. Mr. *Hume* and I never had a dispute—I mean a serious, angry or petulant dispute, in our lives:—indeed I should be most exceedingly surprised to hear that *David* ever had an unpleasant con-

tention with any man;—and if I should be made to believe that such an event had happened, nothing would persuade me that his opponent was not in the wrong: for, in my life, did I never meet with a being of a more placid and gentle nature; and it is this amiable turn of his character, that has given more consequence and force to his scepticism, than all the arguments of his sophistry.—You may depend on this as a truth.

We had, I remember well, a little pleasant sparring at Lord *Hertford's* table at *Paris*; but there was nothing in it that did not bear the marks of good-will and urbanity on both sides.—I had preached that very day at the Ambassador's Chapel, and *David* was disposed to make a little merry with the *Parson*; and, in return, the *Parson* was equally disposed to make a little mirth with the *Infidel*; we laughed at one another, and the company laughed with us both—and, whatever your informer might pretend, he certainly was not one of that company.

As for his other history, that I preached an offensive sermon at the Ambassador's Chapel—it is equally founded in truth; for Lord *Hertford* did me the honour to thank me for it again and again. The *text*, I will own, was an *unlucky* one, and that was all your informer could have heard to have justified his report.—If he fell asleep immediately after I repeated it—I will forgive him.

The fact was as follows:

Lord *Hertford* had just taken and furnished a magnificent *Hotel*; and as every thing, and any thing gives the fashion of the moment at *Paris*, it had been the fashion for every one to go to see the English Ambassador's new

hotel,—it occupied the curiosity, formed the amusement, and gave a subject of conversation to the polite circles of Paris, for a fortnight at least.

Now it fell to my lot, that is to say, I was requested to preach, the first day service was performed in the chapel of this new hotel.—The message was brought me when I was playing a sober game of Whist with the *Thornbills*, and whether it was that I was called rather abruptly from my afternoon's amusement to prepare myself for this business, for it was to be on the next day; or from what other cause I do not pretend to determine, but that unlucky kind of fit seized me, which you know I can never resist, and a very unlucky text did come into my head,—and you will say so when you read it.

“And Hezekiah said unto the Prophet, I have shewn them my vessels of gold, and my vessels of silver, and my wives and my concubines, and my boxes of ointment, and whatever I have in my house, have I shewn unto them: and the Prophet said unto Hezekiah, thou hast done very foolishly.”

Now, as the text is a part of Holy writ, that could not give offence; though wicked wits are sometimes disposed to ill-treat it with their own scurvy misrepresentations.—And as to the discourse itself, nothing could be more innocent, and *David Hume* favoured it with his grace and approbation.

But here I am got, I know not how, writing about myself for whole pages together—whereas the only part of my letters that can justify my being an egotist, is, when I

assure any gentle spirit, or faithful friend, as I now do you, that I am her, or his, or your

Most affectionate,

humble servant,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXIV.

To ———.

*Wednesday Noon.*

**B**ELIEVE me, my dear friend, I have no great faith in Doctors. Some eminent ones of the faculty assured me, many years ago, that if I continued to do as I was then doing, I should not live three months. Now the fact is, that I have been doing exactly what they told me I ought not to do, for thirteen years together—and here I am, as thin, it is true, but as saucy as ever; and it will not be my fault, if I do not continue to give them the lie for another period of equal duration.

It is Lord *Bacon*, I think, who observes,—at least be it who it may that made the observation, it is not unworthy the great man whose name I have just written—That Physicians are old women, who sit by your bed-side till they kill you, or Nature cures you.

There is an uncertainty in the business that often baffles experience, and renders genius abortive—Tho' I mean not, believe me, to be severe on a science which is



sometimes made the means of doing good. Nay, the science itself considered, naturally and physically, is the eye of all the rest. But I do not always hold my peace when I reflect on those self-conceited, upstart professors of it, who fly and bounce, and give themselves airs, if you do not read the directions upon the label of a phial, which contains the matter of their prescriptions, with as much reverence, as if it had been penned by St. *Luke* himself.

Goddess of Health—let me drink thy healing and sustaining beverage at the pure fountain which flows at thy command! Give me to breathe the balmy air, and to feel the enlivening sun—and so I will!—for if I do not see you in fifteen days, I will, on the sixteenth, step quickly into the Dover coach, and proceed without you to the banks of the *Rhone*, where you may follow me if you please—and if you do not, the difference between us will be—that while you are passing your Christmas-day in fencing against fogs, by warm cloaths and large fires, I shall be sitting on the grass, courting no warmth but the all-cheering one which proceeds from the grand luminary of nature.

So think on these things I beseech you—and let me know about it, for I will not remain gasping another month in London, even for your sake,—or for your company, which,—I might add, would be for my own sake.

In the mean time, and at all times, may God bless you.

I am,

most cordially your's,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXV.

To ———.

*Wednesday Noon*

I AM always getting into a scrape, not from a carelessness of offending, as some good-humoured people have suspected, for I do not wish to give offence, but from the want of being understood.—Pope has well expressed the hardship of being forced

——— to trudge

Without a second and without a judge.

I think the quotation is correct.—Indeed, a man may proceed well enough without a second. Genius is oftentimes so far from wanting such an assistant, that it is frequently clogged by it;—but to be without a judge is a mortification which comes home with much severity to the bosoms of those who feel, or fancy, which is pretty near the same thing, that judgment—I mean impartial, adequate judgment, would be their reward.

To be eternally misunderstood, and which naturally follows, to be eternally misrepresented by ignorance, is far, far worse than to be slandered by malice.—Calumny is more than oftentimes, for it is almost always the sacrifice which vice pays to virtue, and folly offers up to wisdom.—A wise man while he pities the efforts of slander, will feel a kind of consequence from the exertion of them;—like the philosopher who is said to have raised a monument to his own fame, with the stones, which the malignity of his competitors had thrown at him.

The divorce between virtue and reputation is too common to be wondered at—though it is too unjust not to be lamented: but that being a circumstance which connects itself with something like the general order of Providence, we are able to console ourselves under it, by hope and resignation. But in the little, and comparatively speaking, the petty business of human fame—the mind may be justified in kicking at the perversions to which its honest and best endeavours are so continually subject.

I do most sincerely assure you, that I have seldom been so proud of myself and the little display of my talents,—whatever they may be—as I was in the very circumstance which has given so much uneasiness. I intended no severity—I was all complacency and good humour—my spirits were in unison with every generous and gracious thought,—and, so far was I from possessing the idea of giving offence—and to a *Lady*—that there never was a moment of my life, perhaps, when I was so disposed to buckle on my armour, and mount my *Rosinante*, to go and fight the cause of injured or captive beauty.—But instead of all this, here am I considered as the very monster whom I myself was ready to combat and to destroy.

You will, therefore, be so good as to communicate these thoughts, in as much better a manner as you please, to Mrs. H——, and assure her, that she has only done what so many have done before her—that is, she has *misconceived*, or, as that word may produced a *misconception*—she has *misunderstood* me.

So far I am most willing to travel in the high-way of

apology; and, if she is disposed to smile, I will receive her returning favour, with all due acknowledgments; but if she should think it clever, or witty, or consequential, to continue to be offended—I will not fail to remember her in a postscript to my chapter on the right and wrong end of a woman; which, though my uncle Toby, from a certain combination of circumstances could never be made to understand, I will explain to the world in such a manner, that they who run may read.

I am not, however, unintelligible to all. There are some spirits who want no key either to my speech or my writings; and they—I mean the spirits—are of the first order. This is some comfort, and that comfort increases both in its weight and measure, on the reflection that you are one of them.

But my paper and postman's bell both warn me to do—what I ought to have done at least a page ago—and that is to write adieu; so adieu, and God bless you.

I am,

most cordially yours,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XXVI.

To ———.

Thursday Nov. 1.

WERE I a Minister of State—instead of being a country-parson;—or rather, though I do not know that it is the better thing of the two,—were I king of a country, not like *Sancho-Pancho*, without a will of my own, but with all the rights, privileges and immunities belonging to such a situation, I would not suffer a man of genius to be pulled to pieces, or pulled down, or even whistled at, by any man who had not some sort of genius of his own.—That is to say, I would not suffer blockheads of any denomination to shew their heads in my territories.

What—will you say—is there no saving clause for the ignorant and the unlettered?—No spot set apart for those on whom science has not beamed; or the current of whose genius poverty has frozen?—My dear friend, you do not quite understand me,—and I beg of you not to suppose—that all men are *blockheads* who are not *learned*—and that no man who is *learned* can be a *blockhead*.

My definitions are not borrowed from the common room of a College, or the dull muzzing *pericranium* of a wordmongering dictionary maker, but from the book of Nature, the volume of the world, and the pandects of experience. There I find a *blockhead* to be a man, (for I

am not at present in a humour to involve the poor women in the definition) who thinks he has what, in fact, he has not—and who does not know how to make a right use of that which he has.

It is the mode of applying *means* to *ends* that marks the character of superior understanding.—The poor scarecrow of a beast that *Yorick* rode so long and to the last, being once set in the right road, will sooner get to the end of his journey, than the fleetest race-horse at *Newmarket*, who has taken an opposite direction.

*Wisdom* very often cannot read or write, and *Folly* will often quote you passages from all the *dead*, and half the living languages. I beg therefore, you will not form a bad,—that is to say a false idea of this kingdom of mine—for whenever I get it, you may be sure of being well appointed, and living at your ease, as every one must do *there*, who lives to his honour.—But to the point.

To the point, did I say?—Alas! there is so much *zig-zag* in my destiny, that it is impossible for me to keep going on strait through one poor letter—and that to a friend; but so it is—for here is a visitor arrived to whom I cannot say nay—and who obliges me to write adieu, a page or two, or three, perhaps, before I intended to do it. I must therefore fold up my paper as it is—and shall only add, God bless you—which, however, is the constant and sincere wish of

your affectionate,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XXVII.

To ———.

*Dijon, Nov. 9, 1765.*

My Dear Friend,

I RECOMMEND it to you,—not, perhaps, above all things, but very assuredly above most things,—to stick to your own understanding a little more than you do; for, believe me, an ounce of it will answer your purpose better than a pound weight of other people's. There is a certain timidity which renders early life amiable, as a matter of speculation; but is very inconvenient indeed, not to say dangerous, according to the present humour of the world, in matters of practice.

There is a manly confidence, which, as it springs from a consciousness of possessing certain excellent qualities and valuable attainments, we cannot have too early; and there is no more impropriety in offering manifestations of it to the world, than the putting on your helmet in the day of battle. We want it as a protection—I say as a protection, from the insults and injuries of others; for, in your particular circumstances, I consider it merely as a defensive quality—to prevent you from being run down, or run over, by the first ignorant blockhead or insolent coxcomb, who perceives your modesty to be a restraint on your spirit.

But this by the way.—The application of it is left to



your own discernment and good sense, of which I shall not write what I think, and what some others think, whose testimony will wear well.

I am so much better pleased since I set my foot on the Continent, that it would do you good to see—and more good still to hear me; for I have recovered my voice in this genial climate; and so far am I now from finding a difficulty to make myself heard across the table, that I am almost fit to preach in a cathedral.

Here they are all hey—go—mad.—The vintage has been abundant, and is now at the close. Every eye beams delight, and every voice is attuned to joy.—Though I am running away as fast as I can well go, and am withal so pressed by the rascal, death! that I ought not in prudence to take time to look behind me; yet cannot I resist the temptation of getting out of my chaise, and sitting for a whole evening on a bank, to see those happy people dance away the labours of the day: and thus they contrive, for two or three hours at least out of the four and twenty, *to forget*, God bless 'em, that there are such things as labour and care in the world.

This innocent oblivion of sorrow is one of the happiest arts of life; and philosophy, in all its storehouse of human remedies, has nothing like unto it. Indeed, I am persuaded that mirth—a sober, well regulated mirth—is perfectly acceptable to the kind Being that made us;—and that a man may laugh and sing, and dance too—and, after all, go to Heaven.

I never could—and I never can—nay, I positively

never will, believe that we were sent into this world to go sorrowing through it. On the contrary, every object around me—the rural dance, and the rustic minstrelsy, that I behold and hear from my window, tell me that man is framed for joy. Nor shall any crack-brained Carthusian Monk,—or all the Carthusian Monks in the world, —persuade me to the contrary.

*Swift* says, *vive la bagatelle*. I say, *vive la joie*; which I am sure is no *bagatelle*; but, as I take it, a very *serious thing*, and the first of human possessions.

May your treasury, my dear friend, continue to have good store in it—and, like the *widow's cruse*, may it fail not!

At *Lyons* I expect to find some tidings of you, and from thence I will dispatch some further tidings of myself.—So in the mean time, and at all times, may God bless you.—Believe me,

I shall ever remain most truly

And affectionately your's,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XXVIII.

To ———.

Lyons, Nov. 15 [1765].

I HAVE travelled hither most deliciously—though I have made my journey in a *désobléant*, and of course, alone. But when the heart is at rest, and the mind is in harmony with itself, and every subordinate feeling is well attuned, not an object offers itself to the attention but may be made to produce pleasure.—Besides, such is the character of this happy people, that you see a smile on every countenance, and hear the notes of joy from every tongue.—There is an old woman, at this moment, playing on the viol before my window, and a groupe of young people are dancing to it, with more appearance, and, I believe, more *reality* of pleasure, than all your brilliant assemblies at *Almack's* can boast.

I love my country as well as any of her children—and I know the solid, characteristic virtues of its people;—but they do not play the game of happiness with that attention or success which is practised and obtained here.—I shall not enter into the physical or moral difference between the two nations—but I cannot, however, help observing that, while the French possess a gaiety of heart, that always weakens and sometimes baffles sorrow, the English still answer the description of the *old* Frenchman, and really continue to divert themselves *moult tristement*.

Nay, how often have I seen at a *York Assembly*, two young people dance down thirty couple, with as grave countenances as if they did it for hire, and were, after all, not sure of being paid: and here have I beheld the sun-burnt sons and daughters of labor rise from their scanty meal with not a pulse in their hearts that did not beat to pleasure;—and, with the brightest looks of satisfaction, make their wooden shoes responsive to the sound of a broken-winded hautboy.

All the world shall never persuade me there is not a Providence, and a gracious one too, which governs it. With every blessing under the sun we look grave, and reason ourselves into dissatisfaction; while here—with scarce any blessing *but the Sun—on est content de son état.*

But the kind Being who made us all, gives to each the portion of happiness, according to his wise and good pleasure; for no one—and nothing is beneath his all-providential care;—*he even tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.*

By such reflections, and under such influences, I am perverted from my purpose; for when I drew my chair to the table, and dipped my pen into the inkhorn, I breathed nothing but complaint, and it was my sole design to tell you so—for I have sent—*à la post restante* again and again, and there is no letter from you. But though I am impatience itself to continue my journey towards the *Alps*, and cannot possibly indulge my curious spirit till I hear from you, yet such is the effect of my sympathetic nature, that I have caught all the ease and good humour of the people about me, and seem to be

sitting here, in my black coat and yellow slippers, as contented as if I had not another step to take; and, God knows, I have a pretty circuit to make, my friend, before I may embrace you again.

It is not, as you well know, my practice to scratch out any thing I write, or I would erase the last dozen lines; as, the very moment I had concluded them, your letter and two others arrived, and brought me every thing I could wish.—I would really linger, if I thought you would overtake me. At all events, we shall meet at *Rome*—*at Rome*—and I shall now take the wings of to-morrow morning to forward my progress thither.

I sincerely hope this paper may be thrown away upon you,—that is, I wish you may be come away before it has made its passage to England.—At all events, my dear boy, we shall meet at Rome. So till then—fare thee well:—there and every where—I shall be,

Your most faithful and affectionate

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXIX.

To ———.

*Bond Street.*

I HAVE a great mind to have done with joking, laughing and merry-making, for the rest of my days, with either man, woman, or child; and set up for a grave, formal, see-saw character; and dispense stupid wisdom,

as I have hitherto been said to have done sensible nonsense, to my country-men and country-women.

To tell you the truth—I began this letter yesterday morning, and was interrupted in getting to the end of it, by half a dozen idle people, who called upon me to lounge and to laugh; though one of them forced me home with him to dine with his sister, whom I found to be a being of a superior order, and who has absolutely made the something like a resolution with which I began this letter, not worth the feather of the quill with which it was written.

She is, in good faith, charming beyond my powers of description; and we had such an evening, as made the cup of tea she gave me more delicious than nectar.

By the bye, she wishes very much to become acquainted with you—not, believe me, from any representations or biography of mine, but from the warm encomiums she has received of you from others, and those, as she says, of the first order. After all this, however, you may be sure that my testimony was not wanting.—So that, when you will give an opportunity, I shall have the honour of presenting you to kiss her hand, and add another devout worshipper at the temple of such transcendant merit.

I am really of opinion that, if there is a woman in the world formed to do you good, and to make you love her into the bargain—which, I believe, is the only way of doing you any good—this is the pre-eminent and bewitching character.—Indeed, were you to command my feeble powers to delineate the lovely being whose affections would well repay thee for all the heart-achs and dis-

quieting apprehensions that may and will afflict thee in thy passage through life, it would be this fair and excellent creature. My *Knight Errant* spirit has already told her that she is a *Dulcinea* to me—but I would most willingly take off my armour and break my spear, and resign her as an *Angel* to you.

I need not say any thing, I trust, of my affection for you; and I have, just now, some singular ideas on your subject, which kept me awake last night, when I ought to have been sound asleep—but I shall reserve them for the communication of my fire-side, or your's, as it may be; and I wish, as devoutly as ever I wished any thing in my life, that my fire was to brighten before you this very evening.

In the name of fortune,—for want of a better at the moment,—what business have you to be fifty leagues from the capital, at a time when I stand so much in need of you, for your own sake.

I hear you exclaim—whom is all this about?—And I see you half determined to throw my letter into the fire, because you cannot find her name in it. This is all, my good friend, as it ought to be—for you may be assured that I never intended to write her name on this sheet of paper. I have told you of the divinity, and you will find the rest inscribed on the altar.

I was never more serious in my life; so let the wheels of your chariot roll as rapidly as post-horses can make them, towards this town; where if you come not soon, I shall be gone; and then I know not what may become of



all my *present* good intentions towards you;—future ones, it is true, I shall have in plenty—for, at all events, in all circumstances, and every-where,

I am,

Most cordially,

and affectionately your's,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XXX.

To ———.

*Friday.*

**T**H E S E may be piping times to you, my dear friend, and I rejoice at it—but they are not dancing ones to me.

You will perceive, by the manner in which this letter is written, that if I dance—*Holbein's* piper must be the fidler.

Since I wrote to you last, I have burst another vessel of my lungs, and lost blood enough to pull down a very strong man: what it has done then with my meagre form, clad as it is with infirmities, may be better imagined than described.—Indeed, it is with difficulty and some intervals of repose that I can trail on my pen; and, if it were

not for the anxious forwardness of *my spirits*, which aids me for a few minutes by their precious Mechanism, I should not be able to thank you at all:—I know I cannot thank you as I ought, for your four letters which have remained so long unanswered, and particularly for the last of them.

I really thought, my good friend, that I should have seen you no more. The grim scare-crow seemed to have taken post at the foot of my bed, and I had not strength to laugh him off as I had hitherto done:—so I bowed my head in patience, without the least expectation of moving it again from my pillow.

But somehow or other he has, I believe, changed his purpose for the present—and we shall, I trust, embrace once again. I can only add, that, while I live, I shall be

Most affectionately your's,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXXI.

To ———.

*Bond-Street, May 8.*

I FELT the full force of an honest heart-ach on reading your last letter.—The story it contains may be placed among the most affecting relations of human calamity, and the happiest efforts of human benevolence. I happened to have it in my pocket yesterday morning

when I breakfasted with Mrs. Meadows; and, for want of something so good of my own, I read the whole of your letter to her,—but this is not all; for, what is more to the purpose, (that is, to the purpose of your honour) she desired to read it herself, and then she entreated me not to delay the earliest opportunity to present *you* to her breakfast-table, and the mistress of it to you. I told her of the aukward distance of an hundred miles, at least, that lay between us; but I promised and vowed,—for I was obliged to do both,—that the moment I could lay hold of your arm, I would lead you to *her vestibule*.—I really begin to think I shall get some credit by you.

Love, I most readily acknowledge, is subject to violent paroxysms, as well as slow fevers; but there is so much pleasure attendant upon the passion in general, and so many amiable sympathies are connected with it; nay,—it is sometimes so suddenly, and oftentimes so easily cured, that I cannot, for the life of me, pity its disasters with the same tone of commiseration, which accompanies my consolatory visits to other less ostensible sources of distress.—In the last sad separation of friends, *hope* comforts us with the prospect of an eternal reunion, and *religion* encourages the belief of it:—but, in the melancholy history which you relate, I behold what has always appeared to me, to be the most affecting sight in the gloomy region of human misfortune: I mean the pale countenance of one who has seen better days, and sinks under the despair of seeing them return. The mind that is bowed down by unmerited calamity, and knows not from what point of the compass to expect any good, is in a state, over which the Angel of pity sheds all his showers—*Unable to dig, and to beg ashamed*—what a des-

cription!—what an object for relief;—and how great the rapture to relieve it!

I do not, my dear boy,—indeed I do not—envy your feelings, for I trust that I share them; but if it were possible for me to envy you any thing that does you so much honour, and makes me love you, if possible, so much better than I did before—it is the little fabric of comfort and happiness which you have erected in the depths of misery. The whole may occupy, perhaps, but little space in this world—but, like the mustard seed, it will grow up and rear its head towards that Heaven, to which the Spirit that planted it will finally conduct you.

*Robinson* called upon me yesterday, to take me to dinner in *Berkeley-square*;—and, while I was arranging my drapery, I gave him your letter to read. He felt it as he ought, and not only desired me to say, every handsome thing on his part to you, but he said a great many handsome things of you himself, during dinner and after it, and drank your health. Nay, as his wine warmed him, he talked loud, and threatened to drink water—like you—the rest of his days.

But while I am relating so many fine things to flatter *your vanity*, let me, I beseech you, mention something to flatter my own;—and this is neither more or less than a very elegant silver standish, with a motto engraved upon it, which has been sent me by *Lord Spencer*. This mark of that Nobleman's good disposition towards me, was displayed in a manner, which enhanced the value of the gift, and heightened my sense of the obligation. I could not thank him for it as I ought; but I wrote my acknowledge-

ments as well as I could, and promised his Lordship that, as it was a piece of plate the *Shandy* family would value the most, it should certainly be the last they will part with.

I had another little business to communicate to you, but the postman's bell warns me to write adieu—so God bless you, and preserve you, as you are;—and this wish, by the bye, is saying no small matter in your favour; but it is addressed for, and to you, with the same truth that guides my pen in assuring you, that I am, most sincerely and cordially, your faithful friend,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XXXII.

To ———

*Bond Street.*

THERE is a certain pliability of the affections, my dear friend, which, with all its inconveniences,—and I will acknowledge a thousand,—forms a wonderful charm in the human character.—To become a dupe to others, who are almost always worse, and, very often, more ignorant than yourself, is not only mortifying to one's pride, but frequently destructive to one's fortune. Nevertheless, there is something, in the very face, and, which is worse, in the mind, of suspicion, of such a detestable complexion and character, that I could never bear it; and whenever I have observed mistrust in the

heart, I would never rap at the door of it, even to pay, if I could help it, a morning visit, much less to take my lodging there.

Niger est, hunc tu Romane caveto.

This sort of cullibility most certainly lays you open to the designs of knaves and rascals; and they are, alas! to be found in the hedges and highway sides, and will come in without the trouble of sending for them.—The happy mean between mad good-nature and mean self-love, is of difficult attainment; though Mr. Pope says,—that *Lord Batburs* possessed it in an eminent degree,—and I believe it. Indeed, it is for my honour that I should believe it, as I have received much kindness, and many generous attentions from that venerable, and excellent nobleman:—as I never possessed this happy quality myself, I can only recommend it to you, without offering any instructions on a duty, of which I cannot offer myself as an example.—This is not altogether clerical,—I mean as clergymen do,—but no matter.

B———— is exactly one of these harmless, inoffensive people, who never frets or fumes, but bears all his losses with a most Christian patience, and settles the account in this manner,—that he had rather lose any thing than that benevolence of disposition, which forms the happiness of his life. But how will all this end?—for you know, as I know, that when once you have won his good opinion, you may impose upon him ten times a day,—if nine did not suit your purpose. The real friends of virtue, of honour, and what is best in the human character, should form a phalanx round such a man, and preserve him from the harpy plottings of sharpers and villains.



But there is another species of cullibility that I never can be brought to pity, which arises from the continual aim to make culls of others. It is not that gentle, confidential, unsuspecting spirit, which I have already hinted to you, but an overweening, wicked, insidious disposition, which, by being continually engaged in the miserable business of deceiving others, either outwits itself, or is outwitted by the very objects of its own fallacious intentions.

There is not, believe me, a more straight way to the being a dupe yourself, than the resting your hopes or pleasure *in making dupes of others*.

Cunning is not an honourable qualification; it is a kind of left-handed wisdom, which even fools can sometimes practise, and villains always make the foundation of their designs:—But, alas! how often does it betray its votaries to their dishonour, if not to their destruction.

Though an occasional stratagem may be sometimes innocent, I am ever disposed to suspect the cause where it must be employed; for, after all, you will, I am sure, agree with me, that where artifice is not to be condemned *as a crime*, the necessity, which demands it, must be considered *as a misfortune*.

I have been led to write thus *Socratically* from the tenor of your letter; though, if my paper would allow me, I would take a frisk, and vary the scene; but I have only room to add, that I dined in *Brook-Street* last Sunday, where many gracious things were said of you, not only by the old folks, but, which is better, by the *young virgins*. I



went afterwards, not much to my credit, to *Argyle Buildings*, but there were no virgins there. So may God forgive me, and bless you,—now, and at all times.—Amen.

I remain,

Most truly and cordially,

Your's

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXXIII.

To ———.

*Coxwold, August 19, 1766.*

AMONG your Whimsicalities, my dear friend, for you have them as well as *Tristram*,—there is not one of them which possesses a more amiable tendency, than that gentle spirit of modern Romance which, hadst thou lived in days of Yore, would have made thee the veriest Knight Errant, that ever brandished a spear, or wore a vizard.

The very same spirit that has led thee from hence to the Bristol Fountain, for no other earthly purpose, but to let a Phthysical maiden lean upon thine arm, and receive the healing waters from thine hand, would, in a former age, have urged thee to traverse forests and fight with monsters, for the sake of some *Dulcinea* whom

thou hadst never seen; or perhaps have made a *red-cross-Knight* of thee, and carried thee over lands and seas to *Palestine*.—

For to tell thee the truth, enthusiasm, is in the very soul of thee:—if thou wert born to live in some other planet, I might encourage all its glowing, high-coloured vulgarities;—but in this miserable, back-biting, cheating, pimping world of ours, it will not do,—indeed, indeed it will not.—And full well do I know, nor does this vaticination escape me without a sigh, that it will lead thee into a thousand scrapes,—and some of them may be such, as thou wilt not easily get out of;—and should the fortunes of thine house be shaken by any of them,—with all thy pleasant enjoyments;—what then? you may say; nay I think I hear you say so,—why thy friends will then lose thee.

For if foul fortune should take thy stately palfrey, with all its gay and gilded trappings from beneath thee; or if, while thou art sleeping by moon-light beneath a tree,—it should escape from thee, and find another master;—or if the miserable Banditti of the world should plunder thee,—I know full well that we should see thee no more;—for thou wouldst then find out some distant cell, and become an Hermit; and endeavour to persuade thyself, not to regret the separation from those friends, who will ever regret their separation from thee.

This enthusiastic spirit, is in itself a good spirit;—but there is no spirit whatever,—no, not a *termagant* spirit, that requires a more active restraint, or a more discreet regulation.

And so we will go next spring, if you please, to the fountain of *Vauclusa*, and think of *Petrarch*, and, which is better, apostrophise his *Laura*.—By that time, I have reason to think my wife will be there, who, by the bye, is not *Laura*;—but my poor dear *Lydia* will be with her, and she is more than a *Laura* to her fond father.

Answer me on these things, and may God bless you.—

I remain,

With the most cordial truth,

Your affectionate

L. STERNE.

# LETTER XXXIV.

To ———.

*Sunday Evening.*

THERE is a certain kind of offence which a man may,—nay, which he ought to forgive:—But such is the jealous honour of the world, that there is a sort of injury, commonly called an affront, which, if it proceeds from a certain line of character, must be revenged.—But let me entreat thee to remember that hardness of heart is not worth thine anger, and would disgrace thy vengeance.—To turn upon a man who possesses it, would not, like *Saint Paul*, be kicking against the pricks,—but, which is far worse, against a flint.—Thou didst right,

therefore my dear boy,—in letting the matter pass as thou hast done.

As far as my observation has reached, and the circle of it is by no means, a narrow one—an hard heart is always a cowardly heart.—Generosity and courage are associate virtues; and the character which possesses the former, must, in the nature of mental arrangement, be adorned with the latter.

If I perceive a man to be capable of doing a mean action,—if I see him imperious and tyrannical; if he takes advantage of the weak to oppress, or of the poor to grind, or of the downcast to insult,—or is continually on the hunt after excuses not to do what he ought,—I determine such a man, though he may have fought fifty duels, to be a coward.—It is by no means a proof that a man is brave because he does not refuse to fight;—for we all know that cowards have fought, nay,—that cowards have conquered,—but a coward never performed a generous or a noble action:—and thou hast my authority to say,—and thou mightest find a worse, that a hard-hearted character never was a brave one. I say, thou mayst justly call such a man a coward,—and, if he should be spirited into a resentment of thy words—fear him not.—*Tristram* shall brighten his armour, and scour the rust from off his spear, and aid thee in the combat.

And now let me ask thee, my good friend, how it happens that thy fancy has of late taken to the Dormitory.—I thought the very names of *Petrarch* and *Laura*, and the enchanting scene of *Vauclusa's* fountain, which is such a classical spot to all tender minds, must have inspired

thee with a flow of sentiment, that would have meandered through every page of thy last letter;—but instead of it, here have I been saluted with a string, of stiff, starched notions of honour, and God knows what—that you could have found no where but in conversing with the young Lords in great periwigs,—and the old Ladies in bouncing fardingals,—who have so long inhabited ——'s long, long Gallery.

However, when you are tired of such company, and stalking about upon a matted floor, you may come here and contemplate the Autumn leaf; and relax yourself with looking at me while I prepare another volume or two to lessen the spleen of a splenetic world.—For with all its faults, I am willing to do it that good at least,—if it will let me;—and, if it will not,—I shall leave you to pity it. So fare thee well,—and God bless you.

I remain,

Thine most affectionate,

L. STERNE.

## LETTER XXXV.

To Lady Caroline Hervey.

*Saturday Noon.*

**H**ERE am I now actually at my writing table,—shall I divulge the secret?—in something between the fortieth and forty-fifth year of my life,—I shall leave your Ladyship, if you please, to imagine all the rest;—

and, in this advancing state of my age, am I to address myself to all those charms which are composed by the happiest combination of youth and beauty.—

But if you should consider this as a presumption, I will quit those beauties which belong only to early life, and make my application to qualities, which are of every period, and possess that lengthened charm, which makes one overlook the wrinkles of age, and turns the hoary hair into Auburn Tresses. That you will always possess the one as you now do the other, I have heard acknowledged wherever I have heard your name mentioned: nor do I remember that your praise was ever accompanied with the exception of a single *but*—from any of the many various forms and shapes, which envy plants in every corner to snarl at excellence.

But while your Ladyship, by a kind of miraculous power, can subdue envy with respect to yourself,—you may sometimes, without meaning it, encourage its attacks upon others.—For my part, nothing can be more certain than that I shall be envied with a vengeance, when it is known with what a gracious condescension you have indulged my request: but envy, on such an occasion, will add to my laurels instead of withering them:—it is like the scar of glory; and, I am as proud of the one, as the patriot hero has reason to be of the other.

To confine myself, however, to the purpose of this paper.

Permit me to thank your Ladyship most cordially, for permitting me to solicit the honour of your protection—

as for attempting to thank you for having granted it, that is not in my power; both my pen and my lips find it impossible to obey the impulse of my heart on the occasion.—Perhaps the time may come, when some of the *Shandy* family may possess a sufficient eloquence, to offer you that homage, which is very devoutly felt, but cannot be adequately expressed,—indeed it cannot, by

Your Ladyship's most faithful,

and obedient humble servant,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXXVI.

To ———.

*Wednesday,—*

*past 9 at Night—and not very well.*

THAT woman is a timid animal, I am most ready, my dear friend, to acknowledge,—but, like other timid animals, is more dangerous, in certain situations, than those who possess a greater degree of natural courage.—I would, therefore, counsel thee for this, among a thousand other reasons, never to make a woman thine enemy, if thou canst possibly help it.—Not that I suspect thee to be capable of an uncourteous act, to any of the lovelier sex,—on the contrary, I think thee qualified, and disposed too, beyond most men I ever knew, to charm them, and do them good: and it is, perhaps, on



that, as much as any other account, that I warn thee against giving them offence.—For I have more than once observed, and mentioned with some concern, a propensity in thy character to collect thy warm affections in one particular circle, and to be careless of, which, as it relates to women, is the same thing as to be ungracious to those, who are not included in it.

There is something amiable,—nay, there may be something noble in the principle of such a conduct; but it is too refined for a world like our's; in which, short as life is, we may easily live long enough, to find the inconvenience and distress of it. He who attaches himself entirely to one object—or even to a few,—may, from ingratitude, caprice, or death, be soon left alone: and he will come with an ill-grace, when necessity compels him, to seek for kindness and society, where he formerly appeared to disdain both.

If a small cohort of friends could be certain of continuing together, till they all sunk, into one common grave, your present theory might form not only a gallant, and a pleasant, but a practicable system; this, however, my dear fellow, cannot be, and, as for living alone when all our friends are gone, it is neither more, or less, than making life a living tomb, which, in my mind, is far,—far worse, than a dead one.

But to return to my subject.

Woman is a timid animal,—and, therefore, I trust and am sure thy generous nature, laying aside every other consideration, will never do any thing designedly to distress it.—Indeed, it does not appear to me, that there can

be a possible situation, which will justify any kind of inattention to the sex, that may give them pain.—For be assured, and I will rest my experience of woman kind, of which I am not a little proud, on the opinion, that the passion for any individual of the sex, whatever her perfections may be, which makes thee relax in thy gracious behaviour to the rest, will never promote thy real happiness:—it may afford thee a certain season, though I believe a very short one, of tumultuous rapture, and then thou wilt awake from thy delirium, to all the grievances of a fretful spirit.

Women look at least for attentions;—they consider them as an inherent birthright, given to their sex by the laws of polished society; and when they are deprived of them, they most certainly have a right to complain—and will be, one and all, disposed to practise that revenge, which is not, by any means, to be treated with contempt. It would be very unpleasant for me to hear in any female society, that my friend was a strange, eccentric, singular, unpleasant character;—and I rather think that he himself would not be pleased to find, that such a description was given, and believed of him.—I do not mean to urge—indeed, I well know you cannot suspect me of so gross an error,—that the same regard is to be equally dealt to all: this is far from being my system;—*but I affirm on the other hand—that all are not to be disregarded for one*; for it will seldom happen, that the affection of that one, will recompense thee for the enmity of all the rest.—Love one, if you please, and as much as you please—but, be gracious to all.

Affection may, surely, conduct thee through an aven-

ue of women, to her who possesses thy heart, without tearing the flounces of any of their petticoats. The displaying courtesy to all whom you meet, will delay you very little in your way, to the arms of her whom you love—and, if I mistake not, will attune your sensibilities, to the higher enjoyment of the raptures you will find there.

We have all of us, enemies enough, my good friend, from the inevitable course of human events, without our encreasing the number by so strange, and unprofitable conduct, as that of neglecting any of the most trifling offices of familiar life.

Besides,—to come more home to thine heart,—let me observe to thee,—that charity, and humanity, which, by the bye, are one, and the same thing, are said to be the foundation of those qualities, which form what is called a well-bred man.—If, therefore, you should, on any account, get into the habit of neglecting the latter,—you may stand more than a chance of its being said, that you do not possess the former, which, you know to be the brightest jewel in the human character.—And this I am certain would wound thee in thy very soul.

—My dear boy, neglect not these, and other things, which, thou mayst call, little things;—for little things, believe me, are, oftentimes, of great importance, in the arrangement of life.

You have been frequently pleased to tell me, as a matter of praise, that, in my descriptions, I am natural to a nicety,—and, when I tell of picking up an handkerchief, or wiping a tear from the cheek of a distressed damsel, with a white one—or the sticking a pin into a

pincushion,—and such things, I am far superior to any other writer.—Apply then, I beseech thee, this observation to thyself, and give me an opportunity of retorting the eulogium upon thee. This, is the sincere wish of thy friend.

So may God bless thee, and direct the best feelings of thy heart, to the best purposes of thy life,

I am,

Your's, most affectionately,

L. STERNE.

The postman's bell tells me I have not time to read what I have written; but I will trust to both our hearts, that there is nothing which either ought to be ashamed of.

## LETTER XXXVII.

To Mrs. Vesey.

*Monday Morn.*

WHEN all the croud, my fair lady, was hurried into the gardens, to hear the musick of squibs and crackers—and to see the air illuminated by rockets, and balloons,—I was flattered, exquisitely flattered, to find you contented to saunter lackadaysically with me, round an exhausted Ranelagh, and give me your gentle, amiable, elegant sentiments, in a tone of voice, that was originally intended for a Cherub. How you got it I know not—nor is it my business to enquire; I am ever rejoiced

to find, any emanation of the other world, in any corner of this, be it where it may;—but particularly, when it proceeds through any female organ,—where the effect must be more powerful, because it is always most delicious.

Now after this little emanation of my spirit, which may not be quite so celestial as it ought, I trust you will not think me ungracious, in desiring you to excuse my promised duties, at your drawing-room this evening. The truth is,—my cough has seized me so violently by the throat, that, though I could hear you sing, I should not be able, to tell you the effects of your music, upon my heart. Indeed,—I can scarce produce a whisper, loud enough, to make the servant bring my gruel.

I have now been so long acquainted with this crazy frame of mine, that I know all its tricks,—and, I foresee, that I have a week's indulgence, at least, to bestow upon it.—However, on Sunday next, I trust,—I may be-cassock myself, in my cloak, and be chaired to your warm cabinet, where, I hope to possess voice enough, to assure you, of the sincere esteem, and admiration, I feel for you,—whether I can tell you so, or no. Colds, and coughs and catarrhs, may tie up the tongue, but the heart is above the little inconveniences, of its prison-house, and will one day escape from them all. 'Till that period, I shall beg leave to remain, with great truth,

Your most faithful,

And obedient, humble servant,

L. STERNE.

LETTER XXXVIII.

To ———.

*Sunday Evening.*

**T**HE poor in spirit, and the poor in purse, with nine out of ten,—nay, with ninety-nine, in an hundred of the world, are so alike, that, by practising the virtues of the former, a man generally gets, all the credit, or rather discredit of the latter.

Here are very few, my friend, who have that nice insight into characters, as to be able to discern the various, but approaching shades, that distinguish them from each other—and, sorry am I to say it, but, there are still fewer, who have the humanity to make them employ their discernment, where it ought to be employed, in favour of the heart.

This moderation of temper, which is always associated to sterling merit, is made to win the love of the few, but is too apt, at the same time, to be not only the dupe, but the contempt of the many. He, who comes not forward with his pretensions, is either supposed to possess none,—or to be prevented by some awkward, or disgraceful circumstances, from offering them.—The ignorant, the upstart, and the assuming will, not be made to believe, that the humble can have merit.—As they themselves wear, the tinsel suit of tawdy qualifications, upon their backs, they look no further for the qualities of others—Which, by the bye, is natural enough.



The wicked, and the knavish, will not suppose, that a man on the score of conscience, or virtue, can be such an idiot, as to practise submission, and keep back brilliant talents from exercise, because he cannot enlist them in an honest cause;—or, that when he is employing them in an humble way,—it is not with some design of artifice, or from some motive that is base:—so that the modest, diffident, and Christian character, stands but little chance of what is called good fortune in the world.—Indeed, Christianly speaking, there is no great promise made to it, in this petty circle of time;—Such virtues, are to look, to more durable honours, when this world is faded away,—and it is their consolation and their delight, here, that such a reward awaits them. Alas,—without this hope, how could the good bear as they do, the thousand untoward circumstances, that are continually pressing upon them,—and, chasing away the smile from the cheeks, and placing tears in their stead.

But I am interrupted,—or I believe,—instead of a letter—you would have had a sermon; but it is Sunday evening,—and therefore with,—a God bless you,—I conclude myself,

Your affectionate—

L. STERNE.



LETTER XXXIX.

To ———.

*Saturday Evening.*

I HAVE had, my friend, another attack, and though I am, in a great measure recovered, it has hinted to me one thing, at least, which is,—that if I am rash enough to risk the Winter in London, I shall never see another Spring.<sup>1</sup>

But be that as it may,—as my family is now in England, and as I have my sentimental journey;—which, I think with you, will be the most popular of my works, to give to the world:—I know not how it will be possible for me, to run so counter to my interest, my affections, and my vanity—as to set my face southward before March,—and I think if I get to that period, I may bid the scarecrow, defiance, for another seven, or eight months,—and then I may leave him in the fogs, and go where, as he so often followed me in vain, he will not follow me again. And this idea cheers my spirit—not, believe me, that I am uneasy about death, as death;—but, that I think, for a dozen years to come—I could make a very tolerable, good use of life.

But be that as it pleases God.

Besides I have promised your,—and sure I may add,

<sup>1</sup> In the very beginning of the following Spring he died at his lodgings in Bond-Street.

my charming friend, Mrs. Vesey, to pay her a visit in Ireland,—which,—I mean that you should do with me.

It is not that you introduced me to her acquaintance,—which is something; it is not her enchanting voice which, humanly speaking may be more,—nor that she has come herself, in the form of a pitying angel, and made my Tisan for me during my illness,—and played at picquet with me, in order to prevent my attempt to talk, as she was told it would do me harm;—which is most of all—that makes me love her so much as I do;—but it is a mind attuned to every virtue, and a nature of the first order,—beaming through a form of the first beauty. In my life did I never see any thing—so truly graceful as she is, nor had I an idea, 'till I saw her—that grace could be so perfect in all its parts, and so suited to all the higher ordinances of the first life, from the superintending impulse of the mind. For I will answer for it, that education, though called forth to the utmost exertions, has played a very subordinate part, in the composition of her character. All its best efforts are—as it were—in the back ground, or rather are lost in the general mass of those qualities, which predominate over all her accessory accomplishments.

In short, if I had ever so great an inclination to cross the gulph, while such a woman beckoned me to stay,—I could not depart.

The world, however has absolutely killed me, and should such a report, have reached you, I know full well, that it would have grieved you sorely,—and I wish you not to shed a tear for me in vain.—That you will drop

more than one over thy friend Yorick, when he is dead, soothes him while he is yet alive;—but I trust that, though there may be something in my death, whenever it happens,—to distress you, there will, be something, also in the remembrance of me, to comfort you, when I am laid beneath the marble.

But why do I talk of marble,—I should say beneath the sod.

For cover my head with a turf, or a stone,

'Twill be all one—

'Twill be all one.

Till then, at least, I shall be, with great truth,

Your most affectionate,

L. STERNE.

*FINIS*



LETTERS TO CATHERINE  
DE FOURMANTEL

*The following thirteen letters—addressed by Sterne, with one exception, to Miss Catherine de Fourmantel, a public singer—were published by Mr. John Murray, the London publisher, in the Miscellanies of the Philobiblon Society, vol. II (London, 1855-56). Five of the letters, however, had previously appeared in Isaac Disraeli's MISCELLANIES OF LITERATURE, 1840.*

*The second letter was actually written out by Sterne and sent to Catherine de Fourmantel for her to copy and send to Garrick as if it were her own. The originals of these letters are now in the Pierpont Morgan Library.*

## LETTER I.

To Miss Catherine de Fourmantel.

Sunday.

Miss,

**I** SHALL be out of all humour with you, and besides will not paint your picture in black, which best becomes you, unless you accept of a few Bottles of Calca-villo, which I have ordered my Man to leave at the Dore in my absence;—the Reason of this trifling Present, you shall know on Tuesday night, and I half insist upon it, that you invent some plausible excuse to be home by 7.

Yrs.

YORICK.

## LETTER II.

To the same.

York, January 1 [1760].

Sir,

**I** DARE say you will wonder to receive an Epistle from me, and the subject of it will surprise you still more, because it is to tell you something about Books.

There are two Volumes just published here, which have made a great noise, and have had a prodigious run;



for, in two days after they came out, the Bookseller sold two hundred, and continues selling them very fast. It is the *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, which the Author told me last night at our Concert he had sent up to London, so perhaps you have seen it; If you have not seen it, pray get it and read it, because it has a great character as a witty smart Book, and if you think so, your good word in Town will do the Author, I am sure, great service. You must understand he is a kind and generous friend of mine, whom Providence has attach'd to me in this part of the World, where I came a stranger—and I could not think how I could make a better return, than by endeavouring to make you a Friend to him and his performance; this is all my excuse for this liberty, which I hope you will excuse. His name is Sterne, a gentleman of great Preferment, and a Prebendary of the Church of York, and has a great character, in these parts, as a man of Learning and Wit; the graver people, however, say 'tis not fit for young Ladies to read his Book, so perhaps you'll think it not fit for a young Lady to recommend it; however the Nobility and Great Folks stand up mightily for it, and say 'tis a good Book, tho' a little tawdry in some places.

I am, dear Sir,

Y<sup>r</sup>. most obd<sup>t</sup>. and humble servant.

LETTER III.

To the same.

My dear Kitty,

**I**F this Billet catches you in Bed, you are a lazy sleepy little slut, and I am a giddy, foolish, unthinking fellow for keeping you so late up; but this Sabbath is a day of sorrow, for I shall not see my dear creature, unless you meet me at Taylor's half an hour after twelve—but in this, do as you like. I have ordered Matthew to turn thief and steal you a quart of Honey. What is Honey to the sweetness of thee, who are sweeter than all the Flowers it comes from. I love you to distraction, Kitty, and will love you to Eternity. So adieu! and believe what time only will prove me, that I am—

Y<sup>rs</sup>.

LETTER IV.

To the same.

Thursday.

My dear Kitty,

**I**HAVE sent you a Pot of Sweetmeats, and a Pot of Honey, neither of them half so sweet as yourself; but don't be vain upon this, or presume to grow sour upon this character of sweetness I give you; for if you do, I

shall send you a Pot of Pickles (by way of contraries) to sweeten you up and bring you to yourself again. Whatever changes happen to you, believe me that I am unalterably yours, and according to y<sup>r</sup> motto, such a one, my dear Kitty, *qui ne changera pas, que en Mourant*,

L. S.

## LETTER V.

To the same.

My dear Kitty,

I BEG you will accept of the inclosed Sermon, which I do not make you a present of merely because it was wrote by myself, but because there is a beautiful character in it, of a tender and compassionate mind in the picture given of<sup>1</sup> Elijah. Read it, my dear Kitty, and believe me when I assure you that I see something of the same kind and gentle distinction in your heart which I have painted in the Prophet's, which has attach'd me so much to you and your Interests that I shall live and dye your affectionate and faithful

LAURENCE STERNE.

*P.S.*—If possible I will see you this afternoon, before I go to Mr. Fothergils. Adieu, dear Friend! I had the pleasure to drink y<sup>r</sup> health last night.

<sup>1</sup> This Sermon was preached by Sterne in 1747.

LETTER VI.

To the same.

London.

My dear Kitty,

I SHOULD be most unhappy myself, and I know you would be so too, if I did not write to you this post, tho' I have not yet heard a word from you. Let me know, my sweet Lass! how you go on without me, and be very particular in everything.

My lodging is every hour full of your Great People of the first Rank, who strive who shall most honor me; even all the Bishops have sent their compliments to me, and I set out on Monday Morning to pay my visits to them all. I am to dine w<sup>h</sup> Lord Chesterfield this week, &c. &c., and next Sunday L<sup>d</sup>. Rockingham takes me to Court. I have snatch'd this single moment, tho' there is Company in my rooms, to tell my dear, dear Kitty this, and that I am hers for ever and ever.

LAU. STERNE.

## LETTER VII.

To the same.

My dear Kitty,

**T**H O' I have but a moment's time to spare, I w<sup>d</sup> not omit writing you an account of my good Fortune; my Lord Fauconberg has this day given me a<sup>1</sup> hundred and sixty pounds a-year, w<sup>ch</sup>. I hold with all my preferment, so that all or the most part of my sorrows and tears are going to be wiped away. I have but one obstacle to my happiness now left, and what that is, you know as well as I.

I long most impatiently to see my dear Kitty. Tell me, tell me what day or week this will be. I had a purse of guineas given me yesterday by a Bishop;<sup>2</sup> all will do well in time.

From morning to night my Lodgings, which by the by, are the genteelest in Town, are full of the greatest Company. I dined these 2 days with 2 ladies of the Bed-chamber; then with L<sup>d</sup> Rockingham, L<sup>d</sup> Edgecomb Lord Winchelsea, Lord Littleton, a Bishop, &c., &c.

I assure you, my Kitty, that Tristram is the Fashion. Pray to God I may see my dearest girl soon and well.—  
Adieu!

Y<sup>r</sup> affectionate friend,

L. STERNE.

<sup>1</sup> The living of Coxwold.

<sup>2</sup> Bp. Warburton.

## LETTER VIII.

To the same.

London, April the 1<sup>st</sup>, 176[o].

My dear Kitty,

I AM truly sorry from y<sup>r</sup> account in your letter to find you do not leave York till the 14<sup>th</sup>, because it shortens the time I hoped to have stole in your Company when you come. I am invited by Lord Rockingham to be one of his Suit when he goes to Windsor to be install'd Knight of the Garter with Prince Ferdinand;<sup>1</sup> so that this honor done me will keep me hear till the 2<sup>d</sup> Week in May when I must go down to take possession of my Preferment.<sup>2</sup> These separations, my dear Kitty, however grievous to us both, must be, for the present. God will open a Dore when we shall sometime be much more together, and enjoy our desires without fear or interruption. I have 14 engagements to Dine now in my Books, with the first Nobility. I have scarce time to tell you how much I love you, my dear Kitty, and how much I pray to God that you may so live, and so love me, as one day to share in my great good fortune. My fortunes will certainly be made; but more of this when we meet. Adieu! Write, and believe your aff<sup>te</sup>. friend,

L. S.

Comp<sup>ts</sup> to Mama.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Rockingham and Prince Ferdinand were installed Knights of the Garter at Windsor, May 6, 1760.

<sup>2</sup> Coxwold.

## LETTER IX.

To the same.

London, May 8th,<sup>1</sup> 176[o].

My dear Kitty,

I HAVE arrived here safe and sound, except for the Hole in my Heart, which you have made like a dear enchanting slut as you are. I shall take lodgings this morning in Piccadilly or the Haymarket, and before I seal this letter, will let you know where to direct a letter to me, which letter I shall wait for by the return of the Post with great impatience; so write, my dear Love, without fail. I have the greatest honors paid and most civility shown me, that were ever known from the great; and am engaged all ready to ten Noble Men and Men of fashion to dine. Mr. Garrick pays me all and more honour than I could look for. I dined with him to-day, and he has promised numbers of great People to carry me to dine with 'em. He has given me an Order for the Liberty of his Boxes, and of every part of his House for the whole Season; and indeed leaves nothing undone that can do me either Service or Credit; he has undertaken the management of the Booksellers, and will procure me a good price—but more of this in my next.

<sup>1</sup> This date is puzzling, unless it be a slip of Sterne's pen—*May* for *March*. It is evident, from the opening sentence, that the letter was written immediately on his arrival in town. Moreover, Horace Walpole, in a letter dated April 4, 1760, states that the bargain with the booksellers, to which reference is made below, was already completed.



And now, my dear, dear girl! let me assure you of the truest friendship for you, that ever man bore towards a woman. Where ever I am, my heart is warm towards you, and ever shall be till it is cold for ever. I thank you for the kind proof you gave me of your Love, and of y<sup>r</sup> desire to make my heart easy, in ordering yourself to be denied to you know who;—whilst I am so miserable to be separated from my dear, dear Kitty, it would have stabb'd my soul to have thought such a fellow could have the Liberty of coming near you. I therefore take this proof of your Love and good principles most kindly, and have as much faith and dependance upon you in it, as if I were at y<sup>r</sup> Elbow;—would to God I was at it this moment! but I am sitting solitary and alone in my bed chamber (ten o'clock at night, after the Play), and would give a guinea for a squeeze of y<sup>r</sup> hand. I send my soul perpetually out to see what you are a doing;—wish I could send my Body with it. Adieu, dear and kind girl! and believe me ever y<sup>r</sup> kind friend and most aff<sup>te</sup>. admirer. I go to the Oratorio this night.—Adieu! Adieu!

*P.S.*—My Service to y<sup>r</sup> Mama.

Direct to me in the Pall Mal, at y<sup>e</sup> 2<sup>d</sup> House from St. Alban's Street.

To Miss Formantel,

At Mrs. Joliffe's, in Stone Gate,

York.

## LETTER X.

Saturday, London.

To the same.

My dear Kitty,

I REC<sup>d</sup> your dear letter, which gave me much pleasure, with some pain, ab<sup>t</sup> Ranalagh; but never, my dear girl, be dejected; something else will offer and turn out, in another Quarter. Thou mayest be assured nothing in this world shall be wanting that I can do, with discretion. I love you most tenderly, and you shall ever find me the same man of Honour and Truth. Write me what night you will be in Town, that I may keep myself at liberty to fly to thee.

God bless you, my dear Kitty.

Thy faithful,

L. STERNE.

*P.S.*—There is a fine print going to be done of me, so I shall make the most of myself, and sell both inside and out. I take care of my health, but am hurried off my legs by going to great people. I am to be presented to the Prince.

My service to y<sup>r</sup> Mama.

LETTER XI.

To the same.

My dear Kitty,

**A**S I cannot propose the pleasure of your company longer than till four o'clock this afternoon, I have sent you a ticket for the Play, and hope you will go there, that I may have the satisfaction of hoping you are entertained when I am not. You are a most engaging creature, and I never spend an evening with you, but I leave a fresh part of my heart behind me. You will get me all, piece by piece, I find, before all is over; and yet I cannot think how I can be ever more than what I am at present,

Your affectionate friend,

LAURENCE STERNE.

*P.S.*—I will be with you soon after two o'clock, if not at two; so get y<sup>r</sup> dinner over by then.

LETTER XII.

To the same.

My dear Kitty,

**I** WAS so intent upon drinking my tea with you this afternoon, that I forgot I had been engaged all this week to visit a Gentleman's Family on this day. I think I mentioned it in the beginning of the week, but your dear company put that with many other things out of my

head: I will, however, contrive to give my dear friend a call at four o'clock; tho' by the by, I think it not quite prudent: but what has prudence, my dear girl, to do with Love? In this I have no government, at least not half so much as I ought.

I hope my Kitty has had a good night. May all your days and nights be happy! Some time it may and will be more in my power to make them so.—Adieu!

If I am prevented calling at 4, I will call at 7.

### LETTER XIII.

To the same.

Dear Kitty,

**I**F it would have saved my life, I have not had one hour or half-hour in my power since I saw you on Sunday; else my dear Kitty may be sure I should not have been thus absent. Every minute of this day and to-morrow is pre-engaged, that I am so much a prisoner as if I was in Jail. I beg, dear girl, you will believe I do not spend an hour where I wish, for I wish to be with you always: but fate orders my steps, God knows how for the present.—Adieu! Adieu!

Y<sup>r</sup> aff<sup>y</sup>

L. S.

On Friday, at 2 o'clock, I will see you.

To Miss Formantelle,  
in Merds Court,  
St. Anne, Soho.

LETTERS FROM  
OTHER SOURCES

*The following five letters are reprinted from the Volume of Letters, in the Collected Edition of the WORKS OF LAURENCE STERNE, published by A. Millar, W. Law and R. Cater, in 1794. The first four letters appeared originally in the anonymous Sterne's Letters to his Friends on Various Occasions, 1775, and the other, from an unknown source, was first published in the collected edition of Sterne's Works, 10 vols., 1780.*

## LETTER I.

From Dr. Eustace in America, to the Rev. Mr.  
Sterne, with a walking-stick.

Sir,

WHEN I assure you that I am a great admirer of Tristram Shandy, and have, ever since his introduction into the world, been one of his most zealous defenders against the repeated assaults of prejudice and misapprehension, I hope you will not treat this unexpected appearance in his company as an intrusion.

You know it is an observation as remarkable for its truth as for its antiquity, that a similitude of sentiments is the general parent of friendship.—It cannot be wondered at, that I should conceive an esteem for a person whom nature had most indulgently enabled to frisk and curvet with ease through all these intricacies of sentiments, which, from irresistible propensity, she had impelled me to trudge through without merit or distinction.

The only reason that gave rise to this address to you, is my accidentally having met with a piece of true Shandean statuary, I mean, according to vulgar opinion, for to such judges both appear equally destitute of regularity or design.—It was made by a very ingenious gentleman of this province, and presented to the late governor Dobbs; after his death Mrs. D. gave it me: its singularity made many desirous of procuring it; but I had resolved at first not to part with it, till, upon reflection, I thought it would



be a very proper, and probably not an unacceptable compliment to my favourite author, and in his hands might prove as ample a field for meditation, as a button-hole, or a broom-stick.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

## LETTER II.

Mr. Sterne's answer.

London, Feb. 9, 1768.

Sir,

**I** THIS moment received your obliging letter, and Shandean piece of sculpture along with it, of both which testimonies of your regard I have the justest sense, and return you, dear Sir, my best thanks and acknowledgment. Your walking-stick is in no sense more Shandaick, than in that of its having more handles than one: the parallel breaks only in this, that, in using the stick, every one will take the handle which suits his convenience. In Tristram Shandy, the handle is taken which suits the passions, their ignorance, or their sensibility. There is so little true feeling in the herd of the world, that I wish I could have got an act of parliament, when the books first appeared, that none but wise men should look into them. It is too much to write books, and find heads to understand them: the world, however, seems to come into a better temper about them, the people of genius here being to a man on its side; and the reception it has met with

in France, Italy, and Germany, has engaged one part of the world to give it a second reading. The other, in order to be on the strongest side, has at length agreed to speak well of it too. A few hypocrites and Tartuffes, whose approbation could do it nothing but dishonour, remain unconverted.

I am very proud, Sir, to have had a man like you on my side from the beginning; but it is not in the power of every one to taste humour, however he may wish it; it is the gift of God; and, besides, a true feeler always brings half the entertainment along with him; his own ideas are only called forth by what he reads, and the vibrations within him entirely correspond with those excited.—'Tis like reading himself——and not the book.

In a week's time I shall be delivered of two volumes of the *Sentimental Travels* of Mr. Yorick through France and Italy; but, alas! the ship sails three days too soon, and I have but to lament it deprives me of the pleasure of presenting them to you.

Believe me, dear Sir, with great thanks for the honour you have done me, with true esteem,

Your obliged humble servant,

LAURENCE STERNE.

## LETTER III.

To \* \* \* \* \*

— I BEHELD her tender look—her pathetic eye petrified my fluids—the liquid dissolution drowned those once bright orbs—the late sympathetic features, so pleasing in their harmony, are now blasted—withered—and are dead;—her charms are dwindled into a melancholy which demands my pity.—Yes——my friend—our once sprightly and vivacious Harriot is that very object that must thrill your soul.—How abandoned is that heart which bulges the tear of innocence, and is the cause—the fatal cause of overwhelming the spotless soul, and plunging the yet untainted mind into a sea of sorrow and repentance—Though born to protect the fair, does not man act the part of a Demon?—first alluring by his temptations, and then triumphing in his victory—When villainy gets the ascendancy, it seldom leaves the wretch till it has thoroughly polluted him—T \* \* \* \* \*, once the joyous companion of our juvenile extravagancies, by a deep-laid scheme, so far ingratiated himself into the good graces of the old man—that even he, with all his penetration and experience (of which old folks generally pique themselves,) could not perceive his drift, and, like the goodness of his own heart, believed him honourable:——had I known his pretensions——I would have flown on the wings of friendship—of regard——of affection——and rescued the lovely innocent from the hands of the spoiler:—be not alarmed at my declaration—I have been long bound to her in the reciprocal bonds of affection; but it is of a more delicate

stamp than the gross materials nature has planted in us for procreation—I hope ever to retain the idea of innocence, and love her still:—I would love the whole sex were they equally deserving.

——— taking her by the hand——the other thrown round her waist——after an intimacy allowing such freedoms——with a look deceitfully pleasing, the villain poured out a torrent of protestations—and though oaths are sacred—swore with all the fortitude of a conscientious man——the depth of his love,—the height of his esteem—the strength of his attachment;—by these, and other artful means to answer his abandoned purpose (for which you know he is but too well qualified)—he gained on the open inexperienced heart of the generous Harriot, and robbed her of her brightest jewel.—Oh England! where are your senators?—where are your laws?—Ye Heavens! where rests your deadly thunder?—why are your bolts restrained from o’erwhelming with vengeance this vile seducer?—I,—my friend, I was the minister sent by justice to revenge her wrongs—revenge—I disclaim it—to redress her wrongs.—The news of affliction flies—I heard it, and posted to \*\*\*\*, where, forgetting my character——this is the style of the enthusiast—it most became my character—I saw him in his retreat——I flew out of the chaise—caught him by the collar—and in a tumult of passion—demanded—sure, if anger is excusable, it must be when it is excited by a detestation of vice——I demanded him to restore——alas! what was not in his power to return.—Vengeance!——and shall these vermin—these spoilers of the fair—these murderers of the mind—lurk and creep about in dens, secure to themselves, and pillage all around them?

—Distracted with my rage—I charged him with his crime——exploded his baseness——condemned his villainy——while coward guilt sat on his sullen brow, and, like a criminal conscious of his deed, tremblingly pronounced his fear.—He hoped means might be found for a sufficient atonement——offered a tender of his hand as a satisfaction, and a life devoted to her service as a recompence for his error.—His humiliation struck me——’twas the only means he could have contrived to assuage my anger—I hesitated—paused—thought——and still must think on so important a concern:—assist me——I am half afraid of trusting my Harriot in the hands of a man, whose character I too well know to be the antipodes of Harriot’s—He all fire and dissipation;—she all meekness and sentiment!—nor can I think there is any hopes of reformation;—the offer proceeds more from surprise or fear, than justice and sincerity.—The world——the world will exclaim, and my Harriot be a cast-off from society——Let her——I had rather see her thus, than miserably linked for life to a lump of vice——She shall retire to some corner of the world, and there weep out the remainder of her days in sorrow——forgetting the wretch who has abused her confidence, but ever remembering the friend who consoles her in retirement.—You, my dear Charles, shall bear a part with me in the delightful task of whispering “peace to those who are in trouble, and healing the broken in spirit.”

Adieu.

LAURENCE STERNE.

## LETTER IV.

To the same.

Sir,

I FEEL the weight of obligation which your friendship has laid upon me, and if it should never be in my power to make you a recompence, I hope you will be recompensed at the "resurrection of the just."——I hope, Sir, we shall both be found in that catalogue;—and we are encouraged to hope, by the example of Abraham's faith, even "against hope."——I think there is, at least, as much probability of our reaching and rejoicing in the "haven where we would be," as there was of the old Patriarch's having a child by his old wife.—There is not any person living or dead, whom I have so strong a desire to see and converse with as yourself:——Indeed I have no inclination to visit, or say a syllable to but a few persons in this lower vale of vanity and tears besides you;—but I often derive a peculiar satisfaction in conversing with the ancient and modern dead,—who yet live and speak excellently in their works.—My neighbours think me *often alone*,——and yet at such times I am in company with more than five hundred mutes—each of whom, at my pleasure, communicates his ideas to me by dumb sign—quite as intelligibly as any person living can do by *uttering* of words.——They always keep the distance from me which I direct,—and, with a motion of my hand, I can bring them as near to me as I please.—I lay hands on fifty of them sometimes in an evening, and handle them as I like;—they never complain of ill-usage,—and, when



dismissed from my presence——though ever so abruptly——take no offence. Such convenience is not to be enjoyed——nor such liberty to be taken——with the living: we are bound——in point of good manners, to admit all our pretended friends when they knock for an entrance, and dispense with all the nonsense or impertinence which they broach till they think proper to withdraw: nor can we take the liberty of humbly and decently opposing their sentiments without exciting their disgust, and being in danger of their splenetic representation after they have left us.

I am weary of talking to the *many*——who though quick of hearing——are so “slow of heart to believe”——propositions which are next to self-evident.—You and I were not cast in *one mould*——corporal comparison will attest it,—and yet we are fashioned so much alike, that we may pass for twins:—were it possible to take an inventory of all our sentiments and feelings—just and unjust—holy and impure—there would appear as little difference between them as there is between instinct and reason, or—wit and madness: the barriers which separate these—like the real essence of bodies—escape the piercing eye of metaphysics, and cannot be pointed out more clearly than geometricians define a straight line, which is said to have length without breadth.—O ye learned anatomical aggregates, who pretend to instruct other aggregates! be as candid as the sage whom ye pretend to revere——and tell them, that all you know is, that you know nothing!

——I have a *mort* to communicate to you, on different subjects——my mountain will be in labour till I see you——



and then,—what then? why you must expect to see it bring forth—a mouse.—I therefore beseech you to have a watchful eye to the cats!—but it is said that mice were designed to be killed by cats—cats to be worried by dogs, &c. &c.—This may be true—and I think I am made to be killed by my cough,—which is a perpetual plague to me: what, in the name of sound lungs, has my cough to do with you—or—you with my cough?

I am, Sir, with the most perfect affection and esteem,

Your humble Servant,

LAURENCE STERNE.

## LETTER V.

To \*\*\*\*.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE received your kind letter of critical, and, I will add, of parental advice, which, contrary to my natural humour, set me upon looking gravely for half a day together: sometimes I concluded you had not spoke out, but had stronger grounds for your hints and cautions than what your good-nature knew how to tell me, especially with regard to prudence, as a divine; and that you thought in your heart the vein of humour too free for the solemn colour of my coat. A meditation upon Death had been a more suitable trimming to it, I own; but then it could not have been set on by me. M. Fothergill, whom I regard in the class I do you, as my best of critics and well-

wishers, preaches daily to me on the same text: "Get your preferment first, Lory," he says, "and then write and welcome." But suppose preferment is long a-coming—and, for aught I know, I may not be preferred till the resurrection of the just—and am all that time in labour, how must I bear my pains? Like pious divines? or, rather, like able philosophers, knowing that one passion is only to be combated with another? But to be serious (if I can,) I will use all reasonable caution,—only with this caution along with it, not to spoil my book, that is, the air and originality of it, which must resemble the author; and I fear it is the number of these slighter touches, which make the resemblance, and identify it from all others of the same stamp, which this under-strapping virtue of prudence would oblige me to strike out.—A very able critic, and one of my colour too, who has read over *Tristram*, made answer, upon my saying I would consider the colour of my coat as I corrected it, that that idea in my head would render my book not worth a groat.—Still I promise to be cautious; but deny I have gone as far as Swift: he keeps a due distance from Rabelais; I keep a due distance from him. Swift has said a hundred things I durst not say, unless I was Dean of St. Patrick's.

I like your caution, "*ambitiosa recides ornamenta.*" As I revise my book, I will shrive my conscience upon that sin, and whatever ornaments are of that kind shall be defaced without mercy. Ovid is justly censured for being "*ingenii sui amator*;" and it is a reasonable hint to me, as I'm not sure I am clear of it. To sport too much with your wit, or the game that wit has pointed out, is surfeiting; like toying with a man's mistress, it may be very delightful solacement to the innamorato, but little to the

by-stander. Though I plead guilty to part of the charge, yet it would greatly alleviate the crime, if my readers knew how much I have suppressed of this device. I have burnt more wit than I have published, on that very account, since I began to avoid the fault, I fear, I may yet have given proofs of.—I will reconsider Slop's fall, and my too minute description of it; but, in general, I am persuaded that the happiness of the Cervantic humour arises from this very thing,——of describing silly and trifling events with the circumstantial pomp of great ones. Perhaps this is overloaded, and I can ease it.—I have a project of getting Tristram put into the hands of the Archbishop, if he comes down this autumn, which will ease my mind of all trouble upon the topic of discretion.

I am &c.

L. STERNE.

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